POLICY *Review*

DECEMBER 2000 & JANUARY 2001, NO. 104

A REPUBLIC, IF WE CAN KEEP IT
TOD LINDBERG

WHY THERE IS A CULTURE WAR
JOHN FONTE

THE ESSENTIALS OF SELF-PRESERVATION
PHILIP GOLD

HOW WE WON IN VIETNAM
VIET D. DINH

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Policy Review

December 2000 & January 2001, No. 104

Features

3 **A REPUBLIC, IF WE CAN KEEP IT**
Coming to terms with the country (and world) we live in
Tod Lindberg

15 **WHY THERE IS A CULTURE WAR**
Gramsci and Tocqueville in America
John Fonte

33 **THE ESSENTIALS OF SELF-PRESERVATION**
What our military can't do without
Philip Gold

51 **HOW WE WON IN VIETNAM**
What, exactly, was Hanoi fighting for?
Viet D. Dinh

63 **DENMARK, THE EURO, AND FEAR OF THE FOREIGN**
Puzzled by a referendum, Danes change the subject
Henrik Bering

Books

75 **THE ANXIETY OF PROSPERITY**
Elizabeth Arens on **The Virtue of Prosperity: Finding Values in an Age of Techno-Affluence** *by* Dinesh D'Souza

82 **THE FUTURE THAT NEVER HAPPENED**
Leonard P. Liggio on **It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States** *by* Seymour Martin Lipset *and* Gary Marks

86 **ALL ABOUT JANE**
Steven C. Munson on **Command Performance: An Actress in the Theater of Politics** *by* Jane Alexander

Letters

91 Remedies for the Russian press; school choice

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POLICY *Review*

DECEMBER 2000 & JANUARY 2001, NO. 104

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Policy Review (ISSN 0146-5945) is published bimonthly by The Heritage Foundation, a research and educational institute that formulates and promotes conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense. For more information, write The Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington DC 20002 or visit www.heritage.org. Periodicals postage paid at Washington DC and additional mailing offices.

The opinions expressed in *Policy Review* are those of the authors and editors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Heritage Foundation.

Policy Review is designed by Mitzi Hamilton for Bird-in-Hand Productions.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: Address letters to *Policy Review*, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington DC 20002-4999. Telephone: 202-546-4400. Fax: 202-608-6136. Email: polrev@heritage.org. Internet site: www.policyreview.com. Direct advertising inquiries to Elizabeth Arens and reprint permission requests to Kelly Sullivan. Reproduction of editorial content without permission is prohibited.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Contact *Policy Review*, Subscriptions Department, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington DC 20002-4999, or call toll-free 1-800-566-9449. Foreign subscribers call 202-608-6161. For address changes (allow six weeks), provide old and new address, including ZIP codes. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Policy Review*, Subscriptions Department, 214 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington DC 20002-4999. Subscription rates: one year, $36; two years, $72; three years, $108. Add $10 per year for foreign delivery. U.S.A. newsstand distribution by Eastern News, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Route 250, Milan OH 44846-9705. For newsstand inquiries, call 1-800-221-3148.

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A Republic, If We Can Keep It

By Tod Lindberg

The American political system has thrown off some truly anomalous results in the past decade. We have gone from the historic 1994 election (a 50-seat swing in the House of Representatives bringing to power a Republican leadership promising "Revolution"), to an historic presidential impeachment and acquittal, to an historic 2000 election in which voters divided as evenly as imaginable in their preference for Democrats or Republicans. We are practically awash in the historic these days.

Commentary in the weeks after the 2000 presidential election told us to watch events closely, since we would never see their like again in our lifetime. This may be true, but it may also miss the larger point. For those who found themselves disturbed one way or another by the outcome and aftermath of the contest between George W. Bush and Al Gore — or as the Clinton impeachment drama unfolded, or as the Republican Congress tried to enact its Revolution — the uniqueness of each event and the unlikelihood of a recurrence may be a false consolation. We may not run into these particular oddities again, but it may be that we are in the midst of something bigger — a pattern of oddity.

One can certainly try to explain away these and lesser instances of strange politics. For example: The fact that a former professional wrestler was elect-

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ed governor of Minnesota — and that one Sunday in 1999, the governor decided to make a triumphant return to the ring as referee in the World Wrestling Federation Summerslam — well, it is certainly strange. But it is also perhaps colorful, in the great American tradition of eccentricity, and not especially noteworthy except in the context of that tradition. Anyway, Jesse Ventura won office with a narrow plurality in a three-way election. How significant is this?

Or, for another example, the fact that voters in Missouri cast their ballots in the state's 2000 Senate race for a man who died three weeks earlier — because the governor promised to appoint the man's widow to the seat — is macabre, and perhaps uniquely so. But the "widow's pension" has a long pedigree in American politics, even if it is not exactly a noble one, and it hardly seems fair to single out this instance as especially noteworthy. Americans are sympathetic to the bereaved, after all. The late Mel Carnahan's election may have been no more than a particularly florid expression of that.

And if it's a bit odd that the son of the forty-first president sought to become the forty-third in a race that ultimately hinged on the vote count in the state in which the candidate's brother served as governor — even as the wife of the president of the United States was unprecedentedly winning election as a United States senator — well, family has always been important in politics, no?

But if instead of trying to explain away these possibly isolated instances of oddity, we take the sum of them — then add to the mix a failed revolution, an impeachment and acquittal, and the closest and most litigated presidential election ever — we could probably be forgiven for reaching the conclusion that this has been a distinctly volatile period in American politics. And we might want to ask if the country has run into anything like this before, and if so, whether any such previous periods have enough in common with our own to point to something that might help account for these strange days.

ONE NEEDN'T SCRATCH at this volatility too deeply before some of its paradoxical qualities become apparent. For example, the American electorate split evenly in the 2000 election — not only in the presidential vote, but also in that voters elected a House and Senate nearly equally split between the parties. But are voters themselves really so bitterly divided?

Certainly, elite partisan and ideological opinion is. Those who associate the advance of their ideological interests with the progress of the Republican Party are at loggerheads with those who associate the advance of their ideological interests with the progress of the Democratic Party. This may not be the most acrimonious period in the history of partisan politics, but it is hardly one of comity. There is unmistakable continuity between the bitterness of

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the fight over the "Contract with America," the bitterness of the argument over impeachment, and the bitterness of the argument over vote-counting in Florida.

But this is elite opinion, not mass opinion. There is no reason whatsoever to think that anything like a majority of the 103 million people who voted in 2000 see politics and elections in such Manichean terms. On the contrary, by any number of measures of public opinion, the electorate these days seems generally content with conditions nationally, generally contemptuous of and cynical about politics, about which the electorate is not particularly well-informed in any case, and perhaps placid to the point of docility.

Nor have the two parties tried to rile people up — though one makes such an observation in the presence of those who care deeply about politics at one's peril. What about the name-calling, the attack ads, and the obviously untrue last-minute pleas to core supporters that the end of the world is near unless each and every one turns out on election day to defeat the enemy? Who could deny that such incendiary tactics figure into most campaigns? This is, indeed, undeniable. But it is important to bear in mind how such negative campaigning is designed to operate on its intended audience: It rallies people *against* supposedly imminent danger. It rarely invites people to gather in *support* of great controversial causes. And as for what the two parties stood for in the 2000 election, they were both working diligently to position themselves as close to the center of the American political spectrum as possible.

The parties were both working diligently to position themselves as close to the center as possible.

This was a campaign in which both candidates campaigned on tax cuts, on paying down the debt, on private accounts as a supplement for Social Security, on more federal involvement in education, on expansion of Medicare to provide a prescription drug benefit, and on continuity in foreign policy. Each said he was committed to smaller government. Both supported the death penalty on the narrow grounds that it deters, but both professed to be troubled by it. The two disagreed not over whether the United States should increase military spending (it should), nor over whether the United States had become and should remain the strongest power in the world (likewise), but over whether the United States was as strong as it should be. Both wished eternal life upon the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. The convergence of the two parties was genuine.

This is not to say that there were no differences. Partisan Democrats saw sharp distinctions between themselves and Republicans, and vice versa. The candidates themselves even said so. Bush accused Gore of favoring big government and centralized decision-making in Washington. Gore accused Bush of favoring the wealthiest 1 percent over helping the middle class and

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shoring up Social Security. And, of course, partisans on each side were right to see differences. The faithful understood perfectly well that behind each campaign's reach for the middle lay rather different visions of where the country should go and how it should be governed. But there was no indication in any of the polling data that most voters discerned an esoteric meaning behind the rhetoric of the two campaigns, nor that they really believed Bush or Gore about the existence of a big difference, nor that they thought they faced a choice between starkly different visions for the future. When the American electorate divided evenly in 2000, it was not dividing evenly between support for the fascists and support for the communists.

The broadest indicators point to a continuing disengagement of voters from politics.

In fact, the broadest indicators point to a continuing disengagement of voters from politics. Throughout the political season, pollsters found consistent evidence that few people were paying much attention. The level of ignorance about where the candidates stood on the issues was quite high. For example, the "Vanishing Voter" project of the Shorenstein Center at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government repeatedly surveyed Americans' knowledge of the candidates' positions on a variety of issues. The final survey, released two days before the election, found that of U.S. citizens 18 years of age or older, 37 percent said they did not know if Bush supported a large cut in personal income taxes, and 11 percent erroneously thought he opposed such a tax cut. Fifty-one percent said they didn't know if he favored a tax credit for low-income people to pay for health insurance, while 22 percent mistakenly thought he opposed it. Thirty-nine percent said they didn't know if Gore opposed using part of Social Security taxes for private retirement accounts, while 19 percent thought, wrongly, that he favored doing so. On the question of tax dollars for private schools, 41 percent said they didn't know if Gore was in favor or opposed, and 21 percent erroneously thought he was in favor.

In some cases, the ignorance extended to who the candidates were. MTV, which would have no obvious reason to *overstate* the ignorance of American youth, reported that a survey it commissioned found that 70 percent of Americans aged 18 to 24 could not name both vice presidential candidates. It is striking that bulletins throughout election day reported high voter turnout, when in fact voter turnout was 51 percent, its lowest in a presidential election with no incumbent since 1924, when Calvin Coolidge beat his closest opponent almost 2-1. Perhaps what accounted for the mistaken reports about high turnout in 2000 was the novelty of seeing any kind of line at the polls at all.

There are a number of possible explanations for this disengagement. Some observers take a kind of perverse comfort in it: The United States is a

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great country precisely because our political system allows people to concern themselves with their daily lives rather than politics. Others have argued that politicians are at fault, because they have failed to offer anything of value to a large swath of Americans, especially the working class. Others say that large numbers of Americans have concluded politics and politicians are corrupt, and that the people can do nothing about it. To risk a generalization that tries to encompass these and other explanations, one might say that large numbers of Americans have concluded, rightly or wrongly, that the problems they face in their lives are matters on which government has nothing to offer them.

It would be a mistake, however, to equate disengagement with discontent. Of the latter, there is little indication. In a time of peace and prosperity, polls show high levels of satisfaction among Americans. Most think they are better off than they were, and most believe things will get better still. Most people think the country is on the "right track." For most of those who think it is on the "wrong track," the worry is not policy but a perceived decline in moral values — something that is surely reflected in the world of politics and governance, but not assigned to it in the way that, say, the question of whether and how to reform welfare is.

It would be a mistake, however, to equate disengagement with discontent.

Meanwhile, political protest is hard to find, and when it has bubbled up, as at the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization and the Washington meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, it has been characterized mainly by incoherence; there was no obvious answer to the question of what demonstrators wanted. A populist crusade would seem a fool's errand. In the end, much of Ralph Nader's early support in the polls returned to its home in the Democratic Party in 2000, and the Reform Party candidacy of Patrick J. Buchanan vanished without a trace.

Contentment and disengagement: Is it now the case that Americans think current uniquely benevolent conditions require no exertion on their part to maintain? Are they in for a rude awakening come the next recession or foreign crisis? Surely there is no comfort in the fact that on the eve of the election, 48 percent of American didn't know George Bush was for an income tax cut (and that the 52 percent who said he was includes those who happened to guess correctly). This cannot be good.

Given low turnout, it is probably fair to conclude that most of the invincibly ignorant stay home, leaving the decisions to those who are paying more attention. The "Vanishing Voter" project found that 43 percent of nonvoters thought Republicans and Democrats were alike, compared to 21 percent of voters. Those who turn out at the polls are clearly applying finer standards of discrimination than those who stay home. But how comforting is this, really? The old joke goes: Q. "Which is worse, ignorance or apathy?" A. "I

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don't know and I don't care." If ignorance is truly on the rise, it's hardly cheering to find oneself rooting for an equal increase in apathy, in the hope that the few who do show up to exercise their franchise will have at least some clue as to what they are doing.

What if ignorance wins? What does it mean if Al Gore really did turn his political fortunes around by kissing his wife at the Democratic convention — and that George W. Bush's comeback began by kissing Oprah Winfrey? If politics is exclusively a matter of symbolism and semiotics, and if the parties turn out to be equally good at them, will we reach the point at which we can say that each party can figure on fooling about half the people all the time?

Such reflections are, to be sure, somewhat perverse at a time when throughout the world, there is no serious competitor to the idea that in order to be just, government should be democratic. At the same time, the age-old problems of democracy remain: What if the people decide they want something they can't have? What if they democratically vote democracy down? What if they are too ill-informed to understand what goes into preserving the way of life to which they have grown accustomed?

It is surely overblown to suggest that we have arrived at that point. Yet disengagement and near-even division do have consequences. The American people are simply not providing much in the way of instruction to their elected leaders about what to do — instruction that might take the form, say, of a clear majority in the House and Senate, or even a clear answer to the question of who should be president. But that is not, finally, the end of the matter. It falls to the people's representatives to try to figure things out.

We have perhaps become a bit casual about the republican character of American government, certainly more so than we are about its democratic character. A substantial part of the drama of the history of the United States turns on the question of political equality, which is obviously intimately related to the question of who gets a say on election day. The democratic character of the country has increased as the franchise has broadened by turns from white, male property owners to all those aged 18 or over. It seems safe to say that Americans are generally pleased with themselves for their increasing democratization, which they regard as an American ideal.

Yet what the Constitution lays out for the central government and guarantees to the citizens of each state is a republican form of government. The people's say in their laws is not direct, but channeled to the election of those who make law. The Framers clearly feared the tyranny of the majority as much as other forms of tyranny. Hence the careful separation of powers and the system of checks and balances between the branches of government — hence, too, the federalist character of government, with substantial authority left in the hands of the states. And while one can point to numerous ways in which the processes of government have become more democratic over the

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years, its structure remains republican.

If this structure offers some protection from the tyranny of the majority, it may offer protection also from the indifference, disengagement, and complacency of the majority. Our elected officials and the elites that serve them — Democrat, Republican, or neutral — may from time to time have to rise to an occasion.

There was much well-meaning talk in the aftermath of the 2000 election about the need for Democrats and Republicans to work together, to meet in the middle, etc. One might think that would be easily achievable, given the centrism on display from the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates. But the reality is more complicated, and it is hardly just another case of the two political parties' dispute being so bitter, as Henry Kissinger once famously said of faculty infighting on campus, because the stakes are so small.

The truth about the relatively cheerful and benevolent policy status quo in the United States is that it is a product of long and bitter political struggle that continues to this day. The convergence of the two major political parties is not something each has decided to undertake for the sake of coming together. Rather, it is a product of the fear of losing a grip on the center, of becoming a long-term minority. For the time being, this constitutes a check on the passions that have led significant numbers of partisans in each party to regard the other as dubious at best, even as illegitimate. But what happens if the center of the electorate no longer serves as a lodestone, for the simple reason that politicians conclude they can manipulate it so well they need no longer fear its anger?

As James Madison wrote in *The Federalist* No. 10,

> [I]t may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests, of the people.

The Framers thought that their republican government offered substantial protection from "men of factious tempers." But they did not promise perfect protection.

THE ODDITIES of the current period in our politics are not, in fact, unprecedented. They are similar in character to the political anomalies in the period from Reconstruction to the end of the nineteenth century. A presidential impeachment and acquittal, a harsh political dispute over the future direction of the country, presidential elections in which the

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popular vote went to one candidate and the electoral college to another.

Is this more than coincidence? Perhaps not. But the period from Reconstruction to the end of the nineteenth century was a period in which the United States emerged from a life-or-death national struggle, the Civil War, rebuilt itself and its institutions, checked the dominance of the legislative branch over the executive, and harnessed a fast-growing economy to claim, for the first time, a seat at the table of the world's great powers. Our current period is one in which the United States emerged victorious from the Cold War, unseated from Congress the brand of domestic liberalism that had dominated the body since the New Deal, forged a "New Economy," and began the process of trying to figure out what it means to be the most important power in the world.

The economic boom and national sense of optimism of the Gilded Age have parallels with the expectations created by the information economy.

Some of the points of connection across a century or more are obvious. It is difficult to read the statements made by the Radical Republicans in Congress during the debate over the impeachment of Andrew Johnson and fail to find an echo in the statements of Republicans in 1998 during the debate over the impeachment of Bill Clinton. And of course, the economic boom and national sense of optimism of the Gilded Age have parallels with the expectations created by the information economy — and some would say that the nineteenth century robber baron is alive and well and living in Redmond, Wash.

Other situations are merely evocative: the way the struggle for the presidency in 1876 between Democrat Samuel Tilden, the popular vote winner, and Republican Rutherford B. Hayes, the eventual winner in the electoral college, relates to the struggle between Al Gore and George W. Bush in 2000. One point of connection is a robust might-have-been scenario in each case: In Southern states in which Reconstruction had come to a halt and the federal army withdrawn, blacks who had voted in large numbers for Republican Ulysses S. Grant in 1872 found themselves struck from voter rolls on a massive scale in 1876. Had they been permitted to vote, they would surely have voted overwhelmingly for Hayes, and he might have won the popular vote as well. Then, too, there is an intriguing moral dimension. A vote for Tilden was a vote to move on — to leave Reconstruction behind, and therefore to abandon sweeping postwar efforts to incorporate blacks into society in the South (in effect, yielding to Jim Crow). Although Reconstruction came to a close under Hayes anyway (in part due to fatigue, in part as a result of the specific terms of the brokered deal that won Hayes the White House), his was the party that had stood for rigorous enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments in the South. Likewise, the long shadow of Bill

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Clinton's scandals fell on the 2000 election, yielding an equal division between the party of censoriousness and the party of acquiescence.

But the particulars of the parallels are less important than the general observation. Let us say this: It would be more surprising if a country undergoing change on so large a scale — from a condition of civil war to self-confident nationhood and great power status — were able to do so without a number of political anomalies and even constitutional crises along the way. The close of the nineteenth century was a time of practical national self-definition on a scale comparable to the theoretical achievements embodied in the Constitution a century before.

And what of our time? It is quite possible, indeed it is becoming harder and harder to deny, that we are in a comparable position of practical national self-definition. The implications of the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union are only beginning to be appreciated.

The United States is immensely strong, the leading power of a world organized largely according to the specifications the United States itself set forth in the aftermath of World War II to fight the Cold War. During the period of superpower rivalry, the United States grew accustomed to thinking of itself as a very powerful country in a world in which power was mainly divided between itself and the Soviet Union. But this power is not a sum, in the sense that subtracting the Soviet Union from the equation leaves the United States with the same amount of power and influence as previously, just no rival. Rather, it is closer to a mathematical dividend, one whose divisor is no longer two (the United States and the Soviet Union) but one (the United States alone). No current or imminent power or combination of powers can balance U.S. power.

This, by itself, would be an awesome enough thing to try to comprehend. In fact, writers and scholars have spent a decade wrestling with and until recently mainly resisting the conclusion that the world is unipolar in character now and may well remain so for quite some time. Yet for better or worse, the change in the world since the collapse of the Soviet Union is bigger than that. The contest between the United States and the Soviet Union was not the equivalent of a contest between two rival but essentially indistinguishable duchies — in which the conquest of one of them would do no more than shift power to the other. On the contrary, the collapse of the Soviet Union also resulted in the demise of the only major competitor to democratic capitalism as an organizing principle of political economy.

The period since the end of the Cold War has seen a tremendous amount of economic liberalization. Economies that have long been subject to central planning have been opened up to market reforms. Socialist countries have been privatizing and liberalizing. In the 1970s, the notion of a "third way" in economics referred to a cradle-to-grave welfare state on the model of

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Sweden — a socialist path between communism and capitalism. Now, most of the left-leaning parties of prosperous Western countries have remade themselves as adherents of a "Third Way" that readily accepts the market and rejects as counterproductive such antique nostrums as the nationalization of industry.

In the United States, the "Third Way" distinguishes itself from old-style, big-government liberalism on one hand and laissez-faire, libertarian capitalism on the other. Since the libertarian impulse died aborning with the Republican "Revolution," this reflects a high degree of satisfaction with current economic arrangements. The story of the 1990s has been the steady rightward march, under Bill Clinton's direction, of the left pole of the debate over the economy. By the time of the 2000 election, the candidate of the traditionally more left-wing party was calling for paying off the national debt by 2012 and for more middle-class tax cuts.

A victory in the realm of power politics is one thing; the triumph of the system one thinks of as one's own is something bigger.

Democracy, too, seems to have been taking root. Authoritarianism has been on the defensive, and in a number of cases, democratic government seems to have won out precisely as a result of a failure of nerve on the part of erstwhile rulers, a collapse of their sense of their own legitimacy. This phenomenon is by no means exactly coextensive with the spread of capitalism. It is possible to be capitalist without being democratic, or democratic without being capitalist. But it hardly seems to be a stretch to say that what has triumphed in the realm of ideas has been democratic capitalism — of the kind practiced by the United States.

A victory in the realm of power politics is one thing; the triumph of the system one thinks of as one's own is something bigger. In neither case was the United States prepared for the result. Nor is there much indication that the American political system nor the American people are especially comfortable with this new role for their country, now that they have come to confront it. Nor is the question of what to do in this role one to which there are any settled answers.

Again, the points of connection between the underlying issues of national self-definition and the specific form political volatility has taken are at times explicit and at times only suggestive. Disputes over the deployment of troops and the use of force clearly go directly to the question of American power — how much we have and how best to use it. Even here, it is difficult to untangle such interwoven strands as partisan conflict, conflict between the executive and legislative branches, jockeying for domestic political or electoral advantage, and principle. But all in all, if one were looking for conditions in which politics might take on a volatile character, one would find them in the

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dawning realization — and it *has* come as a surprise — that one's country is the most powerful on the globe since Rome at its peak and already finds itself with the vast array of responsibilities that are commensurate with that power.

AT THE END of the Civil War we knew we were one country; by the end of the nineteenth century, we knew we were one of several great powers; shortly after the end of World War II, we knew we were one of two superpowers; and by the end of the twentieth century, we were trying to come to terms with our unipolar power. In a sense, our dominant global position fell into our lap, a product of wise decisions made 50 years ago about how to fight a Cold War with the Soviet Union. But what happens next is very much an open question. This is a point on which the American people are providing little guidance. If the democratic process will not tell us, then it will be a republican obligation to figure it out.

The obligation is to make the most of the fortunate position in which we find ourselves. Needless to say, this does not mean living it up. It means doing what we can to prolong a period of benevolence as long as we can, for the same reason Americans gathered in Philadelphia to devise a means to "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

We could probably do nothing for quite a while without great risk to our position — such is the overwhelming character of American power now. But that is provided we do no harm, something that is by no means certain. Each new political oddity in this period of self-definition is a new opportunity for radical misbehavior in the circles that are charged with representing the people and making decisions for them. Fully indulged, such misbehavior just might paralyze the national government sufficiently to allow for a rapid erosion of our position and the quick emergence of a world not in the least to our liking. And it is not clear that there is currently a popular electoral check on such misbehavior to act as a deterrent.

There may be some justice in blaming the people for disengagement from politics. But in the end, there is little point. We live in our times, and they are hardly bad ones. Yet Ben Franklin's famous description of the kind of government America would have — "A republic, if you can keep it" — is an admonition not just to the people but to their representatives. And it seems especially relevant when the people have disengaged from their government at exactly the time their country finds itself engaged in the world as never before.

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Why There Is A Culture War

Gramsci and Tocqueville in America

By JOHN FONTE

AS INTELLECTUAL HISTORIANS have often had occasion to observe, there are times in a nation's history when certain ideas are just "in the air." Admittedly, this point seems to fizzle when applied to our *particular* historical moment. On the surface of American politics, as many have had cause to mention, it appears that the main trends predicted over a decade ago in Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?" have come to pass — that ideological (if not partisan) strife has been muted; that there is a general consensus about the most important questions of the day (capitalism, not socialism; democracy, not authoritarianism); and that the contemporary controversies that do exist, while occasionally momentous, are essentially mundane, concerned with practical problem-solving (whether it is better to count ballots by hand or by machine) rather than with great principles.

And yet, I would argue, all that is true only on the surface. For simultaneously in the United States of the past few decades, recurring philosophical concepts have not only remained "in the air," but have proved influential, at times decisive, in cultural and legal and moral arguments about the most important questions facing the nation. Indeed: Prosaic appearances to the contrary, beneath the surface of American politics an intense ideological struggle is being waged between two competing worldviews. I will call these

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"Gramscian" and "Tocquevillian" after the intellectuals who authored the warring ideas — the twentieth-century Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci, and, of course, the nineteenth-century French intellectual Alexis de Tocqueville. The stakes in the battle between the intellectual heirs of these two men are no less than what kind of country the United States will be in decades to come.

Refining class warfare

We'll begin with an overview of the thought of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), a Marxist intellectual and politician. Despite his enormous influence on today's politics, he remains far less well-known to most Americans than does Tocqueville.

Gramsci's main legacy arises through his departures from orthodox Marxism. Like Marx, he argued that all societies in human history have been divided into two basic groups: the privileged and the marginalized, the oppressor and the oppressed, the dominant and the subordinate. Gramsci expanded Marx's ranks of the "oppressed" into categories that still endure. As he wrote in his famous *Prison Notebooks*, "The marginalized groups of history include not only the economically oppressed, but also women, racial minorities and many 'criminals.'" What Marx and his orthodox followers described as "the people," Gramsci describes as an "ensemble" of subordinate groups and classes in every society that has ever existed until now. This collection of oppressed and marginalized groups — "the people" — lack unity and, often, even consciousness of their own oppression. To reverse the correlation of power from the privileged to the "marginalized," then, was Gramsci's declared goal.

Power, in Gramsci's observation, is exercised by privileged groups or classes in two ways: through domination, force, or coercion; and through something called "hegemony," which means the ideological supremacy of a system of values that supports the class or group interests of the predominant classes or groups. Subordinate groups, he argued, are influenced to internalize the value systems and world views of the privileged groups and, thus, to consent to their own marginalization.

Far from being content with a mere uprising, therefore, Gramsci believed that it was necessary first to delegitimize the dominant belief systems of the predominant groups and to create a "counter-hegemony" (i.e., a new system of values for the subordinate groups) before the marginalized could be empowered. Moreover, because hegemonic values permeate all spheres of civil society — schools, churches, the media, voluntary associations — civil society itself, he argued, is the great battleground in the struggle for hegemony, the "war of position." From this point, too, followed a corollary for which Gramsci should be known (and which is echoed in the feminist slogan) — that *all* life is "political." Thus, private life, the work place, religion,

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philosophy, art, and literature, and civil society, in general, are contested battlegrounds in the struggle to achieve societal transformation.

It is perhaps here that one sees Gramsci's most important reexamination of Marx's thought. Classical Marxists implied that a revolutionary consciousness would simply develop from the objective (and oppressive) material conditions of working class life. Gramsci disagreed, noting that "there have always been exploiters and exploited" — but very few *revolutions* per se. In his analysis, this was because subordinate groups usually lack the "clear theoretical consciousness" necessary to convert the "structure of repression into one of rebellion and social reconstruction." Revolutionary "consciousness" is crucial. Unfortunately, the subordinate groups possess "false consciousness," that is to say, they accept the conventional assumptions and values of the dominant groups, as "legitimate." But real change, he continued to believe, can only come about through the transformation of consciousness.

Just as Gramsci's analysis of consciousness is more nuanced than Marx's, so too is his understanding of the role of intellectuals in that process. Marx had argued that for revolutionary social transformation to be successful, the world views of the predominant groups must first be unmasked as instruments of domination. In classical Marxism, this crucial task of demystifying and delegitimizing the ideological hegemony of the dominant groups is performed by intellectuals. Gramsci, more subtly, distinguishes between two types of intellectuals: "traditional" and "organic." What subordinate groups need, Gramsci maintains, are their own "organic intellectuals." However, the defection of "traditional" intellectuals from the dominant groups to the subordinate groups, he held, is also important, because traditional intellectuals who have "changed sides" are well positioned within established institutions.

The metaphysics, or lack thereof, behind this Gramscian worldview are familiar enough. Gramsci describes his position as "absolute historicism," meaning that morals, values, truths, standards and human nature itself are products of different historical epochs. There are no absolute moral standards that are universally true for all human beings outside of a particular historical context; rather, morality is "socially constructed."

Historically, Antonio Gramsci's thought shares features with other writers who are classified as "Hegelian Marxists" — the Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukacs, the German thinker Karl Korsch, and members of the "Frankfurt School" (e.g., Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse), a group of theorists associated with the Institute for Social Research founded in Frankfurt, Germany in the 1920s, some of whom attempted to synthesize the thinking of Marx and Freud. All emphasized that the decisive struggle to overthrow the bourgeois regime (that is, middle-class liberal democracy) would be fought out at the level of consciousness. That is, the old order had to be rejected by its citizens intellectually and morally before any real transfer of power to the subordinate groups could be achieved.

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Gramsci's long reach

THE RELATION OF ALL these abstractions to the nuts and bolts of American politics is, as the record shows, surprisingly direct. All of Gramsci's most innovative ideas — for example, that dominant and subordinate groups based on race, ethnicity, and gender are engaged in struggles over power; that the "personal is political"; and that all knowledge and morality are social constructions — are assumptions and presuppositions at the very center of today's politics. So too is the very core of the Gramscian-Hegelian world view — group-based morality, or the idea that what is moral is what serves the interests of "oppressed" or "marginalized" ethnic, racial, and gender groups.*

What, for example, lies behind the concept of "jury nullification," a notion which now enjoys the support of law professors at leading universities? Building on the Hegelian-Marxist concepts of group power and group-based morality, jury nullification advocates argue that minorities serving on juries should use their "power" as jurors to refuse to convict minority defendants regardless of the evidence presented in court, because the minority defendants have been "powerless," lifelong victims of an oppressive system that is skewed in favor of dominant groups, such as white males.

Indeed, what is called "critical theory" — a direct descendant of Gramscian and Hegelian-Marxist thinking — is widely influential in both law and education. Critical legal studies posits that the law grows out of unequal relations of power and therefore serves the interests of and legitimizes the rule of dominant groups. Its subcategories include critical race theory and feminist legal theory. The critical legal studies movement could hardly be more Gramscian; it seeks to "deconstruct" bourgeois legal ideas that serve as instruments of power for the dominant groups and "reconstruct" them to serve the interests of the subordinate groups.

Or consider the echoes of Gramsci in the works of yet another law professor, Michigan's Catharine MacKinnon. She writes in *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (1989), "The rule of law and the rule of men are one thing, indivisible," because "State power, embodied in law, exists throughout society as male power." Furthermore, "Male power is systemic. Coercive, legitimated, and epistemic, it *is* the regime." Therefore, MacKinnon notes, "a rape is not an isolated event or moral transgression or

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*This Hegelian-Marxist group-based morality, of course, challenges the central tenets of the Judeo-Christian and Kantian-Enlightenment ethical framework — loosely put, that individuals are responsible for their own actions, and that humans should be treated as "ends" in themselves and not as simply "means" to an "end" (such as the creation of a new and better society).

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individual interchange gone wrong but an act of terrorism and torture within a systemic context of group subjection, like lynching." Similarly, MacKinnon has argued that sexual harassment is essentially an issue of power exercised by the dominant over the subordinate group.

Such thinking may begin in ivory towers, but it does not end there. The United States Supreme Court adopted MacKinnon's theories as the basis for its interpretation of sexual harassment law in the landmark *Meritor Savings Bank* v. *Vinson* (1986). This is only one example of how major American social policy has come to be based not on Judeo-Christian precepts nor on Kantian-Enlightenment ethics, but on Gramscian and Hegelian-Marxist concepts of group power.

Hegel among the CEOs

QUITE APART FROM THEIR POPULARITY among academics and in certain realms of politics, Gramscian and Hegelian-Marxist ideas are also prominent in three other major sectors of American civil society: foundations, universities, and corporations.

As laymen and analysts alike have observed over the years, the major foundations — particularly Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie, and MacArthur — have for decades spent millions of dollars promoting "cutting edge" projects on racial, ethnic, and gender issues. According to author and foundation expert Heather Mac Donald, for example, feminist projects received $36 million from Ford, Rockefeller, Mellon, and other large foundations between 1972 and 1992. Similarly, according to a Capital Research Center report by Peter Warren, a policy analyst at the National Association of Scholars, foundations have crowned diversity the "king" of American campuses. For example, the Ford Foundation launched a Campus Diversity Initiative in 1990 that funded programs in about 250 colleges and universities at a cost of approximately $15 million. The Ford initiative promotes what sounds like a Gramscian's group-rights dream: as Peter Warren puts it, "the establishment of racial, ethnic, and sex-specific programs and academic departments, group preferences in student admissions, group preferences in staff and faculty hiring, sensitivity training for students and staff, and campus-wide convocations to raise consciousness about the need for such programs."

Alan Kors, a history professor at the University of Pennsylvania, has described in detail how Ford and other foundation "diversity" grants are put to use. As he noted in "Thought Reform 101" in the March 2000 issue of *Reason*, "at almost all our campuses, some form of moral and political re-education has been built into freshmen orientation." A "central goal of these programs," Kors states, "is to uproot 'internalized oppression,' a crucial concept in the diversity education planning documents of most universities." The concept of "internalized oppression" is the same as the Hegelian-

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Marxist notion of "false consciousness," in which people in the subordinate groups "internalize" (and thus accept) the values and ways of thinking of their oppressors in the dominant groups.

At Columbia University, for instance, new students are encouraged to get rid of "their own social and personal beliefs that foster inequality." To accomplish this, the assistant dean for freshmen, Katherine Balmer, insists that "training" is needed. At the end of freshmen orientation at Bryn Mawr in the early 1990s, according to the school program, students were "breaking free" of "the cycle of oppression" and becoming "change agents." Syracuse University's multicultural program is designed to teach students that they live "in a world impacted by various oppression issues, including racism."

At Columbia University, students are encouraged to get rid of "their own social and personal beliefs that foster inequality."

Kors states that at an academic conference sponsored by the University of Nebraska, the attendees articulated the view that "White students desperately need formal 'training' in racial and cultural awareness. The moral goal of such training should override white notions of privacy and individualism." One of the leading "diversity experts" providing scores of "training programs" in universities, corporations, and government bureaucracies is Hugh Vasquez of the Todos Institute of Oakland, California. Vasquez's study guide for a Ford Foundation-funded diversity film, *Skin Deep*, explains the meaning of "white privilege" and "internalized oppression" for the trainees. It also explains the concept of an "ally," as an individual from the "dominant group" who rejects his "unmerited privilege" and becomes an advocate for the position of the subordinate groups. This concept of the "ally," of course, is Gramscian to the core; it is exactly representative of the notion that subordinate groups struggling for power must try to "conquer ideologically" the traditional intellectuals or activist cadres normally associated with the dominant group.

The employees of America's major corporations take many of the same sensitivity training programs as America's college students, often from the same "diversity facilitators." Frederick Lynch, the author of the *Diversity Machine,* reported "diversity training" is rampant among the Fortune 500. Even more significantly, on issues of group preferences vs. individual opportunity, major corporate leaders tend to put their money and influence behind group rights instead of individual rights.

After California voters passed Proposition 209, for example — a referendum outlawing racial and gender preferences in employment — Ward Connerly, the African-American businessman who led the effort, launched a

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similar antipreferences initiative in the state of Washington. The Washington initiative I-200 read as follows: "The State shall not discriminate against or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, or public contracting." This language was almost identical to California's Proposition 209. *Atlantic Monthly* editor Michael Kelly reported in the *Washington Post* on August 23 that when asked his opinion on Proposition 209 during the referendum debate, Sen. Joseph Lieberman replied, "I can't see how I could be opposed to it. . . . It is basically a statement of American values . . . and says we shouldn't discriminate in favor of somebody based on the group they represent."

However, Washington's *business* leaders disagreed. In his autobiography *Creating Equal,* Ward Connerly wrote that the "most important significant obstacle we faced in Washington was not the media, or even political personalities, but the corporate world. . . . Boeing, Weyerhauser, Starbucks, Costco, and Eddie Bauer all made huge donations to the No on I-200 campaign. . . . The fundraising was spearheaded by Bill Gates, Sr., a regent of the University of Washington, whose famous name seemed to suggest that the whole of the high-tech world was solemnly shaking its head at us."

Interestingly, private corporations are also more supportive of another form of group rights — gay rights — than are government agencies at any level. As of June 2000, for example, approximately 100 Fortune 500 companies had adopted health benefits for same-sex partners. According to the gay rights organization, Human Rights Campaign, the companies offering same-sex benefits include the leading corporations in the Fortune 500 ranking: among the top 10, General Motors (ranked first), Ford (fourth), IBM (sixth), AT&T (eighth), and Boeing (tenth), as well as Hewlett-Packard, Merrill Lynch, Chase Manhattan Bank, Bell Atlantic, Chevron, Motorola, Prudential, Walt Disney, Microsoft, Xerox, and United Airlines. Corporate reaction to gay activist attacks on Dr. Laura Schlessinger is another indication of how Hegelian-Gramscian the country's business leaders have become. Sears and EchoStar have lately joined a long list of advertisers — Procter and Gamble, Xerox, AT&T, Toys R Us, Kraft, General Foods, and Geico — in pulling their advertising from the popular talk show host. Whether these decisions favoring gay (read: group) rights were motivated by ideology, economic calculation, or an opportunistic attempt to appear "progressive," they typify American businesses' response to the culture war.

The Tocquevillian counterattack

THE PRIMARY RESISTANCE to the advance of Gramscian ideas comes from an opposing quarter that I will call contemporary Tocquevillianism. Its representatives take Alexis de Tocqueville's essentially empirical description of American exceptionalism and celebrate

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the traits of this exceptionalism as normative values to be embraced. As Tocqueville noted in the 1830s (and as the World Values Survey, a scholarly comparative assessment, reaffirmed in the 1990s), Americans are different from Europeans in several crucial respects. Two recent books — Seymour Martin Lipset's *American Exceptionalism* (1997) and Michael Ledeen's *Tocqueville on American Character* (2000) — have made much the same point: that Americans today, just as in Tocqueville's time, are much more individualistic, religious, and patriotic than the people of any other comparably advanced nation.*

What was particularly exceptional for Tocqueville (and contemporary Tocquevillians) is the singular American path to modernity. Unlike other modernists, Americans combined strong religious and patriotic beliefs with dynamic, restless entrepreneurial energy that emphasized equality of individual opportunity and eschewed hierarchical and ascriptive group affiliations. The trinity of American exceptionalism could be described as (1) dynamism (support for equality of individual opportunity, entrepreneurship, and economic progress); (2) religiosity (emphasis on character development, mores, and voluntary cultural associations) that works to contain the excessive individual egoism that dynamism sometimes fosters; and (3) patriotism (love of country, self-government, and support for constitutional limits).

What was particularly exceptional for Tocqueville is the singular American path to modernity.

Among today's Tocquevillians we could include public intellectuals William Bennett, Michael Novak, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Marvin Olasky, Norman Podhoretz, and former Clinton White House advisor and political philosopher William Galston, and scholars Wilfred McClay, Harvey Mansfield, and Walter MacDougall. Neoconservatives, traditional conservatives of the *National Review*-Heritage Foundation stripe, some students of political philosopher Leo Strauss, and some centrist Democrats are Tocquevillian in their emphasis on America's special path to modernity that combines aspects of the pre-modern (emphasis on religion, objective truth, and transcendence) with the modern (self-government, constitutional liberalism, entrepreneurial enterprise). The writings of neoconservative Irving Kristol and *National Review*-style conservative Charles Kesler

*Interestingly, Gramsci himself understood that America was exceptional. He noted that the Protestant ethic was more universally assimilated by the "popular masses" in America than anywhere else because of the absence of what he called "parasitic classes" (i.e. aristocratic, clerical) that have been central to "European civilization." Gramsci labeled this exceptionalism "Americanism" or "Fordism" and astutely recognized that the task of achieving socialism would be much tougher in America than in Europe.

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clarify this special American path to modernity. Like thoughtful scholars before them, both make a sharp distinction between the moderate (and positive) Enlightenment (of Locke, Montesquieu, and Adam Smith) that gave birth to the American Revolution and the radical (and negative) Enlightenment (Condorcet and the *philosophes*) that gave birth to the Revolution in France.

Like their ideological opposites, Tocquevillians are also represented in business and government. In the foundation world, prevailing Gramscian ideas have been challenged by scholars funded by the Bradley, Olin, and Scaife foundations. For example, Michael Joyce of Bradley has called his foundation's approach "Tocquevillian" and supported associations and individuals that foster moral and religious underpinnings to self-help and civic action. At the same time, Joyce called in "On Self-Government" (*Policy Review*, July-August 1998) for challenging the "political hegemony" of the service providers and "scientific managers" who run the "therapeutic state" that Tocqueville feared would result in "an immense and tutelary" power that threatened liberty. As for the political world, a brief list of those influenced by the Tocquevillian side of the argument would include, for example, Sen. Daniel Coats of Indiana, Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. All have supported Tocquevillian initiatives and employed Tocquevillian language in endorsing education and welfare measures that emphasize the positive contributions of faith and responsibility.

There is also a third category to be considered here — those institutions and and individuals that also oppose the Gramscian challenge, but who are not Tocquevillians because they reject one or more features of the trinity of American exceptionalism. For example, *Reason* magazine editor Virginia Postrel sees the world divided into pro-change "dynamists" and anti-change "stasists." Postrel's libertarianism emphasizes only one aspect of American exceptionalism, its dynamism, and slights the religious and patriotic pillars that in the Tocquevillian synthesis provide the nation's moral and civic core.

Similarly, paleoconservatives such as Samuel Francis, a leading Buchananite intellectual, oppose modernism and the Enlightenment in all its aspects, not simply its radical wing. Likewise secular patriots such as historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. embrace a positive form of enlightened American nationalism, but are uncomfortable with the religious and entrepreneurial (including the antistatist) traditions that complete the Tocquevillian trinity. Catholic social democrats like E.J. Dionne accept the religious part of the Tocquevillian trinity, but would like to curb its risky dynamism and deemphasize its patriotism.

A few years ago, several conservative and religious intellectuals writing in a *First Things* magazine symposium suggested that American liberal democracy was facing a crisis of legitimacy. One of the symposium writers, Judge Robert Bork, suggests in his book *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* that "revolutionary" upheavals of the 1960s were "not a complete break with the spir-

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it of the American past," but inherent in the Enlightenment framework of America's founding principles. Bork and others — including Paul Weyrich and Cal Thomas — appear to have speculated that perhaps America's path to modernity was itself flawed (too much dynamism and too little morality). What could be called a partial Tocquevillian position of some conservative intellectuals and activists could be contrasted with the work of American Catholic Whigs — for example, the American Enterprise Institute's Michael Novak and the Faith and Reason Institute's Robert Royal — who have argued, in essence, that America's founding principles are sound and that the three elements of the Tocquevillian synthesis (entrepreneurial dynamism, religion, and patriotism) are at the heart of the American experience and of America's exceptional contribution to the idea of ordered liberty.

At the end of the day it is unlikely that the libertarians, paleoconservatives, secular patriots, Catholic social democrats, or disaffected religious right intellectuals will mount an effective resistance to the continuing Gramscian assault. Only the Tocquevillians appear to have the strength — in terms of intellectual firepower, infrastructure, funding, media attention, and a comprehensive philosophy that taps into core American principles — to challenge the Gramscians with any chance of success.

Tocquevillianism as praxis

Writing in *Policy Review* in 1996, Adam Meyerson described the task of cultural renewal as "applied Tocquevillianism." In explaining one of his key points, Tocqueville writes in *Democracy in America* that "mores" are central to the "Maintenance of a Democratic Republic in the United States." He defines "mores" as not only "the habits of the heart," but also the "different notions possessed by men, the various opinions current among them, and the sum of ideas that shape mental habits" — in short, he declares, "the whole moral and intellectual state of a people."

One of the leading manifestos of the Tocquevillians is "A Call to Civil Society: Why Democracy Needs Moral Truths," published by the Council on Civil Society. It outlines the traditional civic and moral values (Tocqueville's "mores") that buttress the republic. The document (endorsed by, among others, Sens. Coats and Lieberman, in addition to Don Eberly, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Francis Fukuyama, William Galston, Glenn Loury, Cornel West, James Q. Wilson, and Daniel Yankelovitch) states that the "civic truths" of the American regime are "those of Western constitutionalism, rooted in both classical understandings of natural law and natural right and in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. . . . The moral truths that make possible our experiment in self-government," according to this statement, "are in large part biblical and religious," informed by the "classical natural law tradition" and the "ideas of the Enlightenment." The "most elo-

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quent expressions" of these truths are "found in the Declaration of Independence, Washington's Farewell Address, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural Address, and King's Letter from the Birmingham Jail."

The Tocquevillians, then, emphasize "renewing" and "rediscovering" American mores, suggesting that there is a healthy civic and moral core to the American regime that needs to be brought back to life. Moreover, if the first task is cultural renewal, the second task is cultural transmission. Thus, the "Call to Civil Society" declares that the "central task of every generation is moral transmission." Religion, in particular, "has probably been the primary force" that "transmits from one generation to another the moral understandings that are essential to liberal democratic institutions." Moreover, "[at] their best . . . our houses of worship foster values that are essential to human flourishing and democratic civil society: personal responsibility, respect for moral law, and neighbor-love or concern for others." In addition, the statement declares that a "basic responsibility of the school is cultural transmission," particularly "a knowledge of [the] country's constitutional heritage, an understanding of what constitutes good citizenship, and an appreciation of [this] society's common civic faith and shared moral philosophy."

The Tocquevillians emphasize renewing and rediscovering American mores.

In the matter of practice, the past few years have also witnessed what could be called "Tocquevillian" initiatives that attempt to bring faith-based institutions (particularly churches) into federal and state legislative efforts to combat welfare and poverty. In the mid-1990s, Sen. Coats, working with William Bennett and other intellectuals, introduced a group of 19 bills known as the Project for American Renewal. Among other things these bills advocated dollar for dollar tax credits for contributions to charitable organizations, including churches. Coats's goal in introducing this legislation was to push the debate in a Tocquevillian direction, by getting policy makers thinking about new ways of involving religious and other civic associations in social welfare issues. Coats and others were asking why the faith community was being excluded from participating in federal social programs. At the same time there are other Tocquevillians, including Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute, who favor tax credits, but worry that by accepting federal grant money the faith institutions could become dependent on government money and adjust their charitable projects to government initiatives.

In 1996 Congress included a "charitable choice" provision in the landmark welfare reform legislation. The charitable choice section means that if a state receives federal funds to provide services, it could not discriminate against religious organizations if they wanted to compete for federal grants to provide those services. The section includes guidelines designed simultane-

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ously to protect both the religious character of the faith-based institutions receiving the federal funds and the civil rights of the individuals using the services. However, in 1998 the Clinton administration attempted to dilute the "charitable choice" concept in another piece of legislation by stating that administration lawyers opposed giving funds to what they described as "pervasively sectarian" institutions that could be inferred to mean churches doing charitable work.

Besides activity at the federal level, some states have started similar projects. Faithworks Indiana, a center sponsored by the state government, assists faith-based institutions with networking. In Illinois state agencies are reaching out to faith-based institutions through the "Partners for Hope" program. In Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice launched the "Faith and Families" program with the ambitious goal of linking each of the state's 5,000 churches with a welfare recipient.

Both Gov. George W. Bush in Texas and Sen. Joseph Lieberman in Congress have been friendly to some Tocquevillian approaches to legislation. Bush has promoted legislation to remove licensing barriers to church participation in social programs. He has also supported faith initiatives in welfare-to-work and prison reform projects. Lieberman supported the charitable choice provision of the welfare reform act and co-sponsored the National Youth Crime Prevention Demonstration Act that would promote "violence free zones" by working with grass-roots organizations, including faith-based organizations.

Legislative battlegrounds

GRAMSCIAN CONCEPTS have been on the march through Congress in recent years, meeting in at least some cases Tocquevillian resistance and counterattack. For example, the intellectual underpinning for the Gender Equity in Education Act of 1993 (and most gender equity legislation going back to the seminal Women's Educational Equity Act, or WEEA, of the 1970s) is the essentially Gramscian and Hegelian-Marxist concept of "systemic" or "institutionalized oppression." In this view, the mainstream institutions of society, including the schools, enforce an "oppressive" system (in this case, a "patriarchy") at the expense of a subordinate group (i.e., women and girls).

The work of Harvard education professor Carol Gilligan, promoted by the American Association of University Women (AAUW), was influential in persuading Congress to support the Gender Equity in Education Act. Professor Gilligan identifies the main obstacles to educational opportunity for American girls as the "patriarchial social order," "androcentric and patriarchical norms," and "Western thinking" — that is to say, the American "system" itself is at fault.

In speaking on behalf of the bill, Republican Senator Olympia Snowe of

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Maine made a Gramscian case, decrying "systemic discrimination against girls." Democratic Rep. Patsy Mink of Hawaii likewise attacked the "pervasive nature" of antifemale bias in the educational system. Maryland Republican Rep. Connie Morella declared that throughout the schools "inequitable practices are widespread and persistent." Not surprisingly, she insisted that "gender equity training" for "teachers, counselors, and administrators" be made available with federal funds. As noted earlier, one of the remedies to "systemic oppression" is "training" (of the "reeducation" type described by Professor Kors) that seeks to alter the "consciousness" of individuals in both the dominant groups and subordinate groups. Thus, Sen. Snowe also advocated "training" programs to eliminate "sexual harassment in its very early stages in our Nation's schools."

In a related exercise in Gramscian reasoning, Congress in 1994 passed the Violence Against Women Act.

In a related exercise in Gramscian reasoning, Congress in 1994 passed the Violence Against Women Act. According to Democratic Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware, the "whole purpose" of the bill was "to raise the consciousness of the American public." The bill's supporters charged that there was an "epidemic" of violent crime against women. Echoing Catharine MacKinnon (e.g., rape is "not an individual act" but "terrorism" within a "systemic context of group subjection like lynching"), the bill's proponents filled the *Congressional Record* with the group-based (and Hegelian-Marxist) concept that women were being attacked because they were women and belonged to a subordinate group. It was argued by bill's proponents that these "violent attacks" are a form of "sex discrimination," "motivated by gender," and that they "reinforce and maintain the disadvantaged status of women as a group." Moreover, the individual attacks create a "climate of fear that makes all women afraid to step out of line." Although there was no serious social science evidence of an "epidemic" of violence against women, the almost Marxist-style agitprop campaign worked, and the bill passed.

In 1991, the Congress passed a civil rights bill that altered a Supreme Court decision restricting racial and gender group remedies. The new bill strengthened the concept of "disparate impact"; which is a group-based notion that employment practices are discriminatory if they result in fewer members of "protected classes" (minorities and women) being hired than their percentage of the local workforce would presumably warrant.

Nine years later, in June 2000, the U.S. Senate passed the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which would expand the category of hate crimes to include crimes motivated by hatred of women, gays, and the disabled (such crimes would receive stiffer sentences than crimes that were not motivated by hatred based on gender, sexual orientation, or disability status). In support-

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ing the bill, Republican Sen. Gordon Smith of Oregon declared, "I have come to realize that hate crimes are different" because although they are "visited upon one person" they "are really directed at an entire community" (for example, the disabled community or the gay community). Democratic Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts supported the legislation because, he insisted, "standing law has proven inadequate in the protection of many victimized groups."

In a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece, Dorothy Rabinowitz penned a Tocquevillian objection to this Gramscian legislation. Rabinowitz argued that hate crimes legislation undermined the traditional notion of equality under the law by "promulgating the fantastic argument that one act of violence is more significant than another because of the feelings that motivated the criminal." Using egalitarian and antihierarchical (that is, Tocquevillian) rhetoric, Rabinowitz declared that Americans "don't require two sets of laws — one for crimes against government-designated victims, the other for the rest of America."

The Supreme Court and the White House

LIKE THE CONGRESS, the Supreme Court has witnessed intense arguments over core political principles recognizable as Gramscian and Tocquevillian. Indeed, the court itself often serves as a near-perfect microcosm of the clash between these opposing ideas.

A provision of the Violence Against Women Act, for example, that permitted women to sue their attackers in federal rather than state courts was overturned by a deeply divided Supreme Court 5-4. The majority argued on federalist grounds that states had primacy in this criminal justice area. In another 5-4 decision the Supreme Court in 1999 ruled that local schools are subject to sexual discrimination suits under Title IX if their administrators fail to stop sexual harassment among schoolchildren. The case, *Davis* v. *Monroe County Board of Education*, involved two 10-year-olds in the fifth grade. Justice Anthony Kennedy broke tradition by reading a stinging dissent from the bench. He was joined by Justices Rehnquist, Scalia, and Thomas. Justice Kennedy attacked the majority view that the actions by the 10 year-old boy constituted "gender discrimination."

American Enterprise Institute scholar Christina Hoff Sommers in *The War Against Boys* noted that the court majority appears to accept the position of gender feminist groups that sexual harassment is "a kind of hate crime used by men to maintain and enforce the inferior status of women." Thus, Sommers explains, in terms of feminist theory (implicitly accepted by the court), the 10-year-old boy "did not merely upset and frighten" the ten-year old girl, "he demeaned her as a member of a socially subordinate group." In effect, the court majority in *Davis* endorsed Gramscian and Hegelian-Marxist assumptions of power relations between dominant and

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subordinate groups and applied those assumptions to American fifth graders.

Recently, a similarly divided Supreme Court has offered divergent rulings on homosexual rights. In June 2000 the court overturned the New Jersey State Supreme Court and ruled 5-4 in *Boy Scouts of America* v. *Dale* that the Boy Scouts did not have to employ an openly gay scoutmaster. The majority's reasoning was quintessentially Tocquevillian — the First Amendment right of "freedom of association." Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Rehnquist declared that "judicial disapproval" of a private organization's values "does not justify the State's effort to compel the organization to accept members where such acceptance" would change the organization's message. The law, Rehnquist continued, "is not free to interfere with speech for no better reason than promoting an approved message or discouraging a disfavored one, however enlightened either purpose may strike the government."

The court majority's reasoning was Tocquevillian — the First Amendment right of "freedom of association."

The dissent written by Justice Stevens, by contrast, declared that the states have the "right" to social experimentation. Stevens noted that "atavistic opinions" about women, minorities, gays, and aliens were the result of "traditional ways of thinking about members of unfamiliar classes." Moreover, he insisted, "such prejudices are still prevalent" and "have caused serious and tangible harm to members of the class (gays) New Jersey seeks to protect." Thus, the dissenters in this case agreed with the New Jersey Supreme Court that the state had "a compelling interest in eliminating the destructive consequences of discrimination from society" by requiring the Boy Scouts to employ gay scoutmasters.

In 1992 Colorado voters in a referendum adopted Amendment 2 to the state constitution barring local governments and the state from adding "homosexual orientation" as a specific category in city and state antidiscrimination ordinances. In 1996 in *Romer v. Evans*, the U.S. Supreme Court in a 6-3 ruling struck down Colorado's Amendment 2. The court majority rejected the state of Colorado's position that the amendment "does no more than deny homosexuals special rights." The amendment, the court declared, "imposes a broad disability" on gays, "nullifies specific legal protections for this class (gays)," and infers "animosity towards the class that it affects." Further, the majority insists that Amendment 2, "in making a general announcement that gays and lesbians shall not have any particular protections from the law, inflicts on them immediate, continuing, and real injuries."

Justice Anton Scalia wrote a blistering dissent that went straight to the Gramscian roots of the decision. He attacked the majority "for inventing a

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novel and extravagant constitutional doctrine to take victory away from the traditional forces," and for "verbally disparaging as bigotry adherence to traditional attitudes." The court, Scalia wrote, "takes sides in the culture war"; it "sides with the knights," that is, the elites, "reflecting the views and values of the lawyer class." He concluded that: "Amendment 2 is designed to prevent the piecemeal deterioration of the sexual morality favored by the majority of Coloradans, and is not only an appropriate means to that legitimate end, but a means that Americans have employed before. Striking it down is an act, not of judicial judgment, but of political will."

Finally, Gramscian and Hegelian-Marxist concepts have advanced in the executive branch as well. In the 1990s, the federal government attempted both to limit speech that adversely effected subordinate groups; and to promote group-based equality of result instead of equality of individual opportunity.

Gramscian and Hegelian-Marxist concepts have advanced in the executive branch as well.

In 1994, for example, three residents of Berkeley, Calif., protested a federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) plan to build subsidized housing for the homeless and mentally ill in their neighborhood. The residents wrote protest letters and organized their neighbors. HUD officials investigated the Berkeley residents for "discrimination" against the disabled and threatened them with $100,000 in fines. The government offered to drop their investigation (and the fines) if the neighborhood residents promised to stop speaking against the federal housing project.

Heather Mac Donald reported in the *Wall Street Journal* that one lawyer supporting HUD's position argued that if the Berkeley residents' protest letters resulted in the "denial of housing to a protected class of people, it ceases to be protected speech and becomes proscribed conduct." This is classic Hegelian-Marxist thinking — actions (including free speech) that "objectively" harm people in a subordinate class are unjust (and should be outlawed). Eventually, HUD withdrew its investigation. Nevertheless, the Berkeley residents brought suit against the HUD officials and won.

In 1999, to take another example, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that for the first time in American history the federal government was planning to require all companies doing business with the government to give federal officials the name, age, sex, race, and salary of every employee in the company during routine affirmative action audits. The purpose of the new plan, according to Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman, was to look for "racial and gender pay disparities." The implicit assumption behind the Labor Department's action is that "pay disparities" as such constitute a problem that requires a solution, even if salary differences are not the result of inten-

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tional discrimination. The Labor Department has long suggested that the continued existence of these disparities is evidence of "institutionalized discrimination."

Transmission — or transformation

THE SLOW BUT STEADY advance of Gramscian and Hegelian-Marxist ideas through the major institutions of American democracy, including the Congress, courts, and executive branch, suggests that there are two different levels of political activity in twenty-first century America. On the surface, politicians seem increasingly inclined to converge on the center. Beneath, however, lies a deeper conflict that is ideological in the most profound sense of the term and that will surely continue in decades to come, regardless of who becomes president tomorrow, or four or eight or even 20 years from now.

As we have seen, Tocquevillians and Gramscians clash on almost everything that matters. Tocquevillians believe that there are objective moral truths applicable to all people at all times. Gramscians believe that moral "truths" are subjective and depend upon historical circumstances. Tocquevillans believe that these civic and moral truths must be revitalized in order to remoralize society. Gramscians believe that civic and moral "truths" must be socially constructed by subordinate groups in order to achieve political and cultural liberation. Tocquevillians believe that functionaries like teachers and police officers represent legitimate authority. Gramscians believe that teachers and police officers "objectively" represent power, not legitimacy. Tocquevillians believe in personal responsibility. Gramscians believe that "the personal is political." In the final analysis, Tocquevillians favor the *transmission* of the American regime; Gramscians, its *transformation.*

While economic Marxism appears to be dead, the Hegelian variety articulated by Gramsci and others has not only survived the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also gone on to challenge the American republic at the level of its most cherished ideas. For more than two centuries America has been an "exceptional" nation, one whose restless entrepreneurial dynamism has been tempered by patriotism and a strong religious-cultural core. The ultimate triumph of Gramscianism would mean the end of this very "exceptionalism." America would at last become Europeanized: statist, thoroughly secular, post-patriotic, and concerned with group hierarchies and group rights in which the idea of equality before the law as traditionally understood by Americans would finally be abandoned. Beneath the surface of our seemingly placid times, the ideological, political, and historical stakes are enormous.

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The Essentials Of Self-Preservation

What Our Military Can't Live Without

By PHILIP GOLD

THE WORD "DECADENCE" derives from the medieval Latin *de cadere* — to fall away, by implication from some previous height or standard of virtue or excellence. Some years ago, literary critic Robert Adams fleshed out this meaning and its application to human affairs. In *Decadent Societies*, he described historical decadence as the process whereby "societies that without suffering a grievous wound began to languish, struggled vainly for a while against minor enemies, and then succumbed to inner weakness." From this he arrived at "the simplest definition of decadence; it is not failure, misfortune, or weakness, but the deliberate neglect of the essentials of self-preservation — incapacity or unwillingness to face a clear and present danger."

By this standard, America is a decadent society. Despite the expenditure of well over $300 billion a year on defense and related activities, despite rhetoric about being "the world's only superpower" and lacking any conceivable "peer competitor," and despite all the high-tech gadgetry, today the

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United States possesses less *usable* military power than at any time since the late 1970s, perhaps the late 1940s. The problem goes far deeper than the debate over transient "readiness." It is structural. Its components are the following:

- Ten years after the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States continues to field a smaller, ever more costly, unmaintainable, unready, and irrelevant version of its Cold War/industrial age military dinosaur.
- The United States clings to an outdated military strategy of fighting two major land wars on two transoceanic fronts.
- The United States squanders its power on ill-conceived and open-ended commitments — we're now on our second *decade* of bombing Iraq and plan on staying in the Balkans indefinitely.
- The Navy dwindles to 300 deteriorating ships. The Air Force plans to fly its B-52 bombers until they're 70 years old, and it cannot maintain its tactical aircraft fleet. The Marine Corps faces the obsolescence of its helicopters and other major systems. The Army's tanks and trucks, helicopters and weapons wear out. Even M-16 ammunition is in short supply. During the Kosovo operation, the Army couldn't get to the fight at all.
- Preventing casualties has become an end in itself, and an extreme casualty-intolerance drives major political and military decisions.
- The United States refuses to mount an effective national missile defense, or to organize properly for effective homeland defense against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.
- The United States fails to exploit its tremendous potential offensive advantages in space. Simultaneously, we neglect to defend the civilian and military systems upon which we are now critically and irrevocably dependent.

After years of official denials, not even the Pentagon denies that this force is in serious trouble. The question for the next administration is: What now?

Dollars are not enough

ONE ANSWER, much beloved of both political conservatives and the Pentagon, is to spend more money. Throughout the Cold War, peacetime defense spending averaged about 3 percent of GNP. In recent months, both conservative civilian analysts and senior officers have touted a "4 percent solution" — raising defense spending from its present 2.9 percent of GDP to 4 percent. This proposal, an attempt to lock in a share of the pie, would produce extremely high annual defense budgets — within

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a decade or so, well over $400 billion, assuming the economy remains robust. In a time of peace, these levels of spending should not be necessary.

Still, more money must be spent. Final fiscal 2001 expenditures (the basic defense appropriations bill enacted in August 2000, plus all the ancillary bills and inevitable supplementals) will probably tally at least $320 billion. But several score billion, carefully targeted, are additionally needed over the next several years to maintain parts of the present "legacy force" while moving towards a twenty-first century "transformation force."

One item that, contrary to Pentagon rhetoric, does not need endless spending is personnel. There are currently about 1.4 million men and women on active duty. A properly structured twenty-first century force — smaller units, more people-replacing high technology, more privatization and outsourcing of domestic support functions, base closures, etc. — could have 1.2 million individuals or fewer. This is vital. Until 1973, America's military was predominantly young, single, and male. Today it is older, increasingly female, married, and with children. Support requirements, from housing and medical care to day-care centers and morale services, are enormous; construction and maintenance backlogs stretch into the next decade. The best way to provide a decent lifestyle for active service members is to downsize dramatically.

But more important than money is thought, and a clear sense of destination. Merely parceling out the billions in the traditional manner no longer makes sense. The "legacy force" is too large, too unwieldy, and too expensive. Part of it can and should be cut, part of it transformed. But where is this "transformation force" bound? Superficial arguments and invocations of "readiness" are meaningless. The real questions are: Who should be getting ready for what, and how?

Where we've been

THIRTY YEARS AGO the Marine Corps tried, not too successfully, to teach me the fine art of land navigation. I managed to revalidate the old adage about few things being more dangerous than a second lieutenant with a map and compass. But I do recall one irrefutable axiom of the art: You can't know where you're going until you know where you are. And you can't know where you are until you know where you've been.

Ten years ago, the United States had the world's most powerful military. By many measurements — technology and expenditure, especially — we still do. But this expensive, high-tech force grows ever more fragile, and expensive technologies don't automatically produce either victory or security, as the USS Cole incident most recently proved. For reasons ranging from Clinton budget cuts to casualty intolerance, from material unreadiness to ethical ambiguity, we face a serious lack of usable power. To put it bluntly: A

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force that is unready, unsustainable, mistrustful of both its missions and its leaders, and unable or unwilling to take casualties does not constitute usable power.

The confluence of forces and circumstances adding up to this peril did not develop suddenly. When the Cold War ended, it became apparent that America's conventional forces could be drawn down somewhat from their Reagan-era levels. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and Joint Chiefs Chairman Colin Powell were determined not to "mess up the build-down," as had happened after previous wars, and to keep a base force capable of rapid reconstitution, should the need arise. Their 1990, pre-Desert Storm *Base Force Study* (BFS) proposed about a 25 percent cut, more or less across the board. Their requirement was that the United States be ready to fight two "Major Regional Conflicts" (MRCs) — specifically, in the Persian Gulf and Korea — at the same time. Why this approach? Essentially, plans centered around fighting a single war would call for forces much smaller than either Cheney or Powell wanted. From the beginning, then, the "two MRC strategy" was less a strategy than a sizing justification.

The "plans/resources mismatch" has long been part of the American way of war.

In structural terms, this was not wrong; the larger force would provide a much more effective base from which to reconstitute. But it was also part of a venerable tradition of military fantasy, of finding allegedly "strategic" justifications for the maximum fundable force. The "plans/resources mismatch" has long been part of the American way of war. In World War II, the United States raised only half the divisions originally planned, yet exhausted its manpower pool. Only Hiroshima kept the extent of the exhaustion from becoming a national scandal and eventual tragedy. The 1951 Lisbon Conference, held while Korea was decimating American strength, set utterly unreachable, not to say fantastic, NATO ground-force goals.

The Kennedy administration posited a "two-and-a-half war" strategy, simultaneously fighting the USSR, China, and some half-power somewhere. The half-war that did occur, Vietnam, required 15 years of recovery time. After Nixon opened China, the strategy dropped to "one-and-a-half." Jimmy Carter played with a "swing strategy," whereby American forces in one theater would hold on until forces in another theater could win and then swing on over. Never in the twentieth century did conventional plans and resources balance.

Ronald Reagan broke this pattern, if only by refusing to take the fantasy game too seriously. (One notable exception: Navy Secretary John Lehman's "maritime strategy," which called for carrier attacks and Marine assaults upon the Soviet Union as a means of justifying a 600-ship Navy.) Reagan's strategy was simple: Build, then build some more, simultaneously pressuring

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the Soviets to accept that, given the ever-widening technological and economic gaps between us and them, it was time to come to terms. There was a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) — a.k.a. the microprocessor revolution — aborning, which yielded incredible advances in precision targeting, intelligence-gathering, and communications. The Soviets, who called it the "military-technological revolution" and who may have sensed their doom before we did, began to yield to the logic. Then the Soviet Union collapsed.

And then came Desert Storm, a conflict at once climacteric and prophetic. It was, in some ways, the clash the Pentagon had planned for decades in central Europe, only fought in the Arabian desert. But it was also the merest first glimpse of what an RMA military could do against a conventionally powerful but technologically inferior foe — so long as that foe did not resort to nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons of mass destruction.

Clinton inherited both a superb yet shrinking military and a daunting conundrum.

So President Clinton inherited both a superb yet shrinking military and a daunting conundrum: how to transform it, technologically and structurally, into a force that could handle whatever the twenty-first century might send our way. And what would come our way was increasingly clear. It wouldn't be massed armies, but "asymmetric" threats and "niche capabilities," from knocking out our satellites and denying access to vital foreign ports and airfields, to terror weapons overseas and at home, and, increasingly, to cyber attacks.

Clinton's response to this challenge was progressive structural decay and, strategically, eight years of what the Navy calls "steering by your wake." The 25 percent Cheney-Powell reduction grew to over a 40 percent reduction. Simultaneously, Clinton used the force more, sending the military on 48 separate overseas missions, from short-term disaster relief to the Balkans to the inherited mess in Iraq. (In the 15 years preceding his administration, a much larger military did only 20 such operations.) The Pentagon started raiding maintenance funds to pay for current operations, then raiding procurement and R&D accounts to pay for maintenance.

Soon enough, it became clear that the military was headed for crisis. But even as the force began imploding, the "two Major Regional Conflicts strategy" remained the official line. Les Aspin, Clinton's first defense secretary, flirted briefly with "win-hold-win," a throwback to the old Carter swing notion, but nobody bought it. So the 1993 *Bottom-Up Review* (BUR) concluded: Everything's fine; we'll just do more with less. Serious analysts pronounced the BUR DOA. And a cycle began that would consume the rest of the decade — a cycle of high-level pronouncements followed by devastating criticism.

In 1995 the administration created the Commission on Roles and Missions (CORM) in accordance with that ancient rule of bureaucracy: If

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you want to make sure nothing happens, study the problem. *Directions for Defense: The Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions* concluded, once again, that the state of the military was no cause for concern. In 1996, the National Defense Authorization Act was passed, which instructed the Defense Department to produce, every four years, a Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The first QDR came out in 1997 and at last conceded that the "two nearly simultaneous MRCs" scenario was not realistic. So it changed MRC to MTW ("Major Theater War") and "nearly simultaneous" to "overlapping time frames." Again, outside the Pentagon, the reaction was dismissive.

Finally Congress noticed a pattern. All these studies that weren't intended to produce major changes weren't producing major changes. So Congress chartered the National Defense Panel (NDP) to undertake a critique of the QDR. Their effort, *Transforming Defense*, came out in late 1997 and represented a fine initial attempt to break the mold. Specifically, they introduced two terms that had been conspicuously absent in most prior official pronouncements. These terms were *transformation* — time to get serious about forcing this venture into the next century — and *homeland defense* — time to get serious about the myriad threats now gathering.

Congress also chartered the National Security Studies Group (NSSG), also called the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century, to prepare the way for the 2001 QDR II and produce something to give the next president. The commission has thus far issued two of its three intended reports. In the first, *New World Coming*, the theme was clear. "[F]or many years to come Americans will be increasingly less secure, and *much less secure than they now believe themselves to be*." (Italics in the original.) The second report, *Seeking a National Strategy*, provided little more than a checklist for strategic decision making, apparently due to irreconcilable differences among commission members. The final report will be submitted to the next president. Meanwhile the QDR II process is under way.

In sum, 10 years of official studiousness has produced little more than a *faux* vindication of the present structure and strategy coupled with a growing uneasiness that two key concepts, "transformation" and "homeland defense," have yet to be addressed substantively, let alone comprehensively.

Of course, the defense debate has hardly been confined to commissions. While these reports were being churned out, the armed forces — the keepers of the operational arts of warfare and the writers of their own budgets — were engaged in a veritable war over war.

The war over war

"INTER-SERVICE RIVALRY" — the phrase conjures up a variety of images, from Army-Navy football games to generals and admirals pounding table tops. It sometimes seems almost ludicrous. Yet

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inter-service rivalry, a relatively recent and peculiarly American affair, is a serious game with serious consequences. Money is involved, trillions of dollars over decades. And, today, the futures of the individual services are also at stake.

In the beginning, there was no inter-service rivalry. If it happened on land, the Army did it. The Navy pursued its activities at sea. There were, of course, a few overlaps. The Army maintained coastal defenses and artillery; the Navy might occasionally bombard a fort or land small parties of Marines. But neither could do the other's job. Therefore, neither could take the other's job. Since there was no permanent unified command structure, neither service could command the other. And since there was no Defense Department, the secretaries of war and the Navy reported directly to their sole common superior, the commander in chief. Everybody knew the rules.

The airplane was the first innovation to blur the tidy distinction between land and naval operation.

The airplane was the first innovation to blur the tidy distinction between land and naval operations. Then came an incredible proliferation of mix-and-match weapons. You could put airplanes on ships: carriers. You could put armies on ships: large-scale amphibious operations. You could put soldiers on airplanes and helicopters: airborne and air-assault forces. You could hang or stow missiles on almost anything. Aircraft and missile ranges now covered continents and more. Satellites could provide precision guidance and navigation for missiles flying 5,000 miles — or second lieutenants 50 meters outside the wire. Once, for example, there were only two or three effective ways to fight enemy tanks. Now there are many, including (theoretically) submarine-launched cruise missiles carrying submunitions guided by satellite.

To put it differently, systems proliferate, but effects converge. People can do each other's jobs. That's why, despite all the talk (and action) in the realm of "jointness" and cooperation in the field, the services guard their "core competencies," their "operational arts," so jealously. The Army, for example, accepts the Marines as fellow land warriors; the National Security Act of 1947 mandates such acceptance. But watch what would happen should the Marines propose to establish a parachute regiment, or should the Army wish to station a brigade permanently afloat somewhere. Airborne means Army; amphibious means Marines. And that must always be that.

The 1990s witnessed many large and small inter-service clashes over roles, missions, and core competencies. Three are presented here as examples of what the services were debating operationally while the high-level commissions pondered strategy.

Presence. "Presence" (as distinguished from occupation via conquest) might be defined as the art and science of influencing people without the

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actual use of force. Traditionally, presence was achieved in two ways. One was through the Army: "boots on the ground." The other was Navy: "showing the flag." In some cases, presence was powerful — a carrier battle group off-shore, an amphibious group with Marines at the ready, Cold War forces garrisoned in Europe, etc. In other cases, "gunboat diplomacy" — the fact that the gunboat, however puny, symbolized national might and the readiness to use it — yielded presence.

As the American overseas structure shrank in the 1990s, presence seemed a viable means of enhancing service missions and appropriations. The Army argued for more exercises and activities; the Navy wanted the same. Things that had never been considered "presence" started getting counted. "Relationships," for example — contacts with foreign militaries, from exercises and officer exchange to cocktail parties. The USS Cole was in Aden as much on a "presence" as on a refueling stop.

Desert Storm was a stunning demonstration that the best way to fight massed ground forces was now from the air.

In the mid-1990s, in an unacknowledged but nonetheless real exercise in budget advocacy, the Air Force proposed "virtual presence." Since long-range bombers operating from three bases (Guam, Diego Garcia, the continental U.S.) could hit any point on earth within 18 hours of alert, and since everybody knew it, we had presence without actually being there.

The Navy countered that submarines provided even better "virtual presence," since they could be anywhere, stay there almost indefinitely, land SEALS, fire missiles, conduct reconnaissance and surveillance, etc. The debate over claims of presence, and the money accompanying them, accomplished little, save raising inter-service anxieties and suspicions.

Halt. "Halt" was an Air Force construct that roiled the Army and, to a lesser extent, the Marines for several years. American strategy has long been to let the other side hit first, halt their advance, assemble forces, then launch a climactic ground counter-offensive. Air power advocates argued that the vital phase was the "halt," a phase dominated by air power, and not the final attack. After all, once an enemy was halted, he would have effectively lost. Also, an early halt would provide time to mobilize and train the reserves.

In some ways, this was an Air Force bid to be deemed the decisive arm and be funded accordingly. Why shouldn't it work? In Desert Storm, the ground offensive hadn't won the war in the traditional manner. The ground offensive ended it after a stunning demonstration that the best way to fight massed ground forces was now from the air. Correspondingly, fewer ground forces, at least active ground forces, would be needed. The Army countered that it was still the decisive force, since people lived on land, not in the air,

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and that this was just the latest in a long series of dubious Air Force claims to battlefield supremacy. Furthermore, what would happen if the "halt" didn't work?

"*Great powers don't do windows.*" At issue here is the propriety and efficacy of "Military Operations Other Than War" (MOOTW), specifically humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, and peace-enforcing. At first, it seemed that MOOTW might be not such a bad deal, financially. Former Army Chief of Staff Dennis Reimer proclaimed his service "the 911 force for the global village." The Marine Corps, allied with the Army in the "halt" debate, countered that they already had the "911" job. The Navy and Air Force touted their respective and not inconsiderable contributions. Behind this dispute was the notion: If that's where the money is, so be it.

Experience soon revealed, however, that relief and peacekeeping operations were service money-losers and that they blunted and exhausted combat units. They also did bad things to the military ethos. Support for these operations soon became something of a litmus test for separating the traditional warriors from the new do-gooders. Defense analyst and Desert Storm veteran John Hillen neatly summed up the prevailing contempt: "Great powers don't do windows." For reasons of national policy as well as military preference, relief and peacekeeping operations were anathema.

Hillen had a point. The warrior and constabulary ethics (victory versus peacekeeping) don't mix, as the recent unpleasantness involving the 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers in Bosnia and their alleged use of "excessive force" has sadly demonstrated. Sadly, too, military disgust with MOOTW has generated another mindset, known as "radical force protection." It kept U.S. and NATO aircraft three miles above mobile ground targets during the Kosovo bombing. One young Army lieutenant, just back from Bosnia, related to a West Point class that his battalion commander had given him the mission of prohibiting casualties. Every day while in Bosnia, he told his men that there was nothing there worth dying for.

The "great powers don't do windows" mindset and the "radical force protection" approach, coupled with legally inexpressible disdain for the senior civilian and, in some cases, military leadership, have begun to produce an attitude not seen since the final years of Vietnam. It might be called "contempt of mission," an alienation from the essence of military professionalism, the sanctity of accomplishing the mission, and the civilian world. It is not a comforting development.

Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines

STILL, THE PICTURE IS not all bleak. Military alienation could vanish quickly, given the right changes. And if the 1990s were a decade of straitening, they were also a time of rethinking. Untold thousands of good men and women left the military. But others, in the post-

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Vietnam tradition, have stayed. Despite all the physical and moral degradations, each of the services has laid the basis for transformation. There have also been numerous acts of military statesmanship. These must be given their due, before proceeding to this essay's proposal for serious but limited and prudent restructuring.

Army. It is possible that the current Army chief of staff, Gen. Eric Shinseki, will go down in history as one of this country's great peacetime military innovators. If so, he will have to build on an ambiguous legacy, and against considerable internal opposition. At the moment, Gen. Shinseki is grappling with two issues, one unique, the other perennial.

The unique issue is *transformation*, evolving the Army into a force capable of prevailing on the traditional battlefield with smaller, lighter, more lethal units, while also dealing with unconventional and "asymmetric" threats, such as weapons of mass destruction, terrorist attacks, and urban warfare where combatants mingle with civilians. The challenge is unique, in that never before has an army had to do so much so quickly when not goaded by the threat of defeat. The 1990s produced a strange counterpoint of initiative and elision. Endless programs and ideas with names like "Force XXI," "The Army after Next," "The Army after Next and a Half," and "digitizing the battlefield" yielded a mixture of promising ideas and dead ends, still to be sorted out. No other mixture could have been expected.

The Army's divisional structure dates back at least to Napoleon. It is also obsolete.

Transformation from an industrial age to a twenty-first century force involves more than applying technology to existing structures. The Army's combat power is organized around 10 active divisions, in effect mini-armies of 12,000 to 18,000 and more depending on type (airborne, air assault, light infantry, armored, etc.), capable of extended operations. This divisional structure dates back at least to Napoleon. It is also obsolete. The future probably lies with brigades of a few thousand, perhaps tailored into light corps. This means new kinds of weapons — goodbye to the heavy tank, heavy mechanized infantry, ponderous logistical support units, perhaps even Army aviation as currently conceived. Furthermore, new communications, intelligence, and other technologies mandate flattening the hierarchy, perhaps even taking out a layer or two.

And there's the difficulty. While cuts in enlisted personnel might be done fairly easily as a byproduct of restructuring, the elimination of officer slots — especially the prized command and staff jobs vital to promotion — will be harder to accomplish. And, of course, cuts in active duty personnel usually entail greater reliance on the part-time citizen-soldiery.

That's the second issue: What should be done with the National Guard, the repository of the Army's reserve combat power? Throughout the 1990s,

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the Pentagon claimed it could "find no mission" for the guard's eight divisions; it was willing to tolerate 15 smaller "enhanced brigades." Simultaneously, the Army miserably overused the guard on Balkan and other assignments, conducting the largest aggregate peacetime call-up in American history. Army-National Guard relations, rarely cordial, grew publicly acerbic. And National Guard recruiting and retention fell off. Guard members are liable for unlimited state duty, in addition to federal call-ups, all of which take a toll on careers and families.

To his credit, Gen. Shinseki has directed an intense set of experimental transformation programs, leading to fundamental decisions in the 2001-03 period. Perhaps most notable: the experimental brigades and future weapons systems work now underway at Fort Lewis, Washington, and elsewhere. (One intriguing concept: the "distributed tank." A tank consists of weapons, sensors, and transportation. Why not split up the functions to different platforms?) He has also moved toward greater integration of the guard and the active forces. The Pentagon has found uses for those eight divisions. Internal opposition has been intense.

Relations between the Army and the National Guard, rarely cordial, grew publicly acerbic.

What will the Army look like in 10 years? Impossible to predict. What should it look like? Smaller, certainly. Still built around divisions? Probably not — it would be far better to concentrate on task-organizing "building-block" brigades of a few thousand members divided into light, easily transported and sustained "expeditionary" corps, as needed for specific tasks and missions, from full open-field combat to street war. There is, to be sure, an enormous danger here. Lighter units might prove too weak for full combat, yet too much (or too irrelevant) for urban and other lesser contingencies. And, as Marine Commandant James Jones likes to point out, even though it's necessary for Army units to become more "expeditionary," i.e. lighter and more easily deployed, "expeditionary" also requires sustainability. Marine expeditionary deployments are built for sustainability from the sea and from austere shore facilities — a challenge that the Army, with its traditional dependence on elaborate logistic support systems and massive fixed bases, has yet to solve.

What will be the active/guard/reserve relationship? Very likely, a high and increasing level of dependence on citizen-soldiers across the spectrum of operations and conflict. In fact, it may not be too much of an exaggeration to predict that the United States will return, de facto, to something resembling the Founders' original military intent: a small active establishment backed up by a large (over a million) citizen-soldiery. And also, capable: New training techniques, from virtual reality simulators to computerized exercises and various forms of "distance learning" make possible unprece-

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dented levels of peacetime readiness. In this sense, twenty-first century technologies empower eighteenth century virtues. Reserve and National Guard flying squadrons have long been the equals of their full-time counterparts. In Desert Storm, one Marine reserve tank company accounted for about half the Corps' ground tank kills.

Navy. This service's act of military statesmanship came early. When the Soviet Navy collapsed, there was no fleet out there left to fight. In 1992, the Navy issued a short paper, ". . . from the Sea," that abandoned a century-long orientation, the central belief that the job of the Navy was to fight other navies. There would be no more fleet action on the high seas, no more patrolling the sea lanes against packs of lethal predators — from now on, the Navy would support the land campaign. Given the Navy's traditional fierce independence, this represented a conversion of almost Pauline proportions. Adm. Frank Kelso, who presided as chief of naval operations, is now remembered for only one thing — his resignation over the Tailhook scandal. He deserves better.

A change of heart does not automatically produce a change of hulls. Transforming the fleet will take decades.

But a change of heart does not automatically produce a change of hulls. Transforming the fleet will take decades, and the Navy remains far too enamored of aircraft carriers. Once, these expensive ships were justified because they could take air power far beyond the reach of land-based aviation. Today, Air Force "global reach" is real. Also, there's the notorious "Rule of Three." It takes three carriers to keep one on-station — one there, one preparing to relieve it, one recovering from the last deployment. Still, there are promising efforts underway to develop vessels suited for littoral operations and support of the land campaign: the weapons-heavy "streetfighter" and the land attack destroyer, to mention only two. In the past, most surface combatants were designed for high-seas operations, which generated very different weapons and other requirements. To protect an aircraft carrier is one task; to bombard a hostile shore for days on end is quite another. Torpedos and depth charges don't work there. But the attack submarine, originally intended for fighting Soviet submarines, is showing remarkable utility in this area. Naval aviation is also undergoing a slow reconfiguration.

So what will the Navy look like in 10 years? Not too different from its present mix of ships. What should it look like? Certainly larger — 350 ships, at a minimum. It should also be moving away from dependence on large-deck carriers to a force based on smaller surface combatants and attack submarines.

Air Force. Whatever happens to the Army and Navy, the former will still put boots on the ground and the latter will still put to sea. Only the Air

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Force, at the moment of its world supremacy, must evolve into something entirely different.

After Desert Storm, the Air Force did a commendable job of downsizing and restructuring. Under its current leader, Gen. Michael Ryan, the Air Force has shifted to an "expeditionary" mode, tailoring a set of 10 "Aerospace Expeditionary Forces" (AEFs) capable of rapid deployment and extended operations overseas, in addition to long-range bombers operating from fixed bases. It's a wise restructuring, both for operational and personnel reasons.

But the age of manned air combat is coming to an end. Aircraft have simply grown too expensive, and although there needs to be a person in the loop somewhere, that somewhere is no longer always the cockpit. The future lies with cheaper, more plentiful unmanned and robotic vehicles, with nano-technologies and micro-systems, and in space. Especially in space, which the Air Force has never given the attention and resources it deserves. The Air Force must, over the next few decades, yield pilot dominance to — dare we say? — geeks. In the short term, the Air Force must get what it needs to maintain air supremacy, specifically the F-22 fighter. But in the long term, its future depends on applying its traditional genius, courage, and energy to a transformation that no military service has ever undergone before.

The age of manned air combat is coming to an end. Aircraft have simply grown too expensive.

So what will the Air Force look like in 10 years? Structurally, it will be about the same, perhaps a bit smaller. Hopefully, it will be flying an adequate fleet of F-22 fighters (intended to replace the F-15) and receiving its share of the joint strike fighter (replacing the F-16 and A-10). What should it look like? It should look like a service fully committed to its own unique transformation, aggressively developing and fielding unmanned and space systems.

Marines. Former Commandant Charles Krulak did a brilliant job of insulating the Marine Corps from its commander in chief. Alone among the services, the Marines raised their recruiting and retention standards, exceeded their quotas, and kept their boot camps single-sex. Results in three other areas have been mixed but promising.

First, by law, the Marine Corps holds primary responsibility for the amphibious mission. But the World War II-style beach assault has gone the way of the cavalry charge. It's now called "operational maneuver from the sea," emphasizing landings by air and sea in lightly defended or undefended areas, launched from over the horizon and not dependent on major supply buildups ashore. In an age of deadly antiaircraft and antiship missiles (not to mention new forms of mines), this is no simple task. The corps also faces obsolescence of many of its critical systems, such as helicopters and

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amphibious assault vehicles. The doctrine is sound; the assets are inadequate.

Second, Gen. Krulak developed the concept of the "three block war" — being prepared to serve as peacekeepers on one block, as peace enforcers on the second, and to fight all-out on the third. This means urban warfare, especially in Third World mega-sprawls where militias with assault rifles and cell phones can work to deadly effect, and the media can show the consequences to the world. (A case in point is the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict.) The Marines' "urban warrior" exercises demonstrated how hard it will be to develop doctrine and equipment for such combat.

Third, the Marine Corps has undertaken serious work in the development of non-lethal weaponry for use in this kind of combat, especially in situations where the enemy mingles with civilians. To date, results have also been mixed. Clearly, however, these efforts can pay dividends for the other services and, in some cases, civilian law enforcement. They should be continued.

What will the Marine Corps look like in 10 years? About the same as today, although perhaps a bit larger. What should it look like? The current commandant, Gen. Jones, should keep it on course.

Space Force, Peace Force, warriors, guard

THE 1990S WERE indeed a time of military decline and decay. But there was also serious thought. It's clear that overall strategy must be reconceived. It's also clear that many useful and vital initiatives are out there, in the services, the research establishment, the contractors, and elsewhere; only a few have been mentioned here. But how to get from here to there? More precisely, how to prepare for future conflict without reviving the struggles and animosities of the past, and without a vicious resurgence of inter-service rivalry? Some analysts and senior officers hold that such a revival may be inevitable, perhaps even beneficial. It's time to put everything on the table, they argue. Time to reopen the National Security Act of 1947 and other legislation and agreements; time, perhaps, even to consider merging the services. This approach is dangerous. Too much animosity would result; too much of value would be lost. The current structure can be adapted to twenty-first century requirements, provided three things happen.

First, as already mentioned, more money must be allocated. Carefully targeted spending increases, coupled with serious restructuring and Pentagon business reforms, can solve a lot of problems.

Second, a coherent new strategy must be developed, based more on countering the array of threats this country faces than on planning for particular wars in particular locales. This is an approach sometimes known as a "capabilities-based strategy." It may not be as satisfying as containing communism or smashing the Axis, but it is a strategy appropriate to an era when dangers

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are many, foes numerous, and resources limited.

Third, there must be a new concept of the division of military labor that transcends service interests and parochialism. This need not be legally enshrined. The current structure is adequate, and few with any clear understanding of how militaries work would wish to alter or abolish the services, with their mix of empowering traditions and institutional competencies. But the old land/sea/air distinctions long ago lost their clarity.

What we need is not a new structure so much as a new heuristic, one that I call Space Force, Peace Force, warriors, guard — and a new division of labor based on the premise that a twenty-first century force should be both smaller and more specialized than the present arrangement. This might seem odd, perhaps even illogical. The Pentagon has long held that conventional forces should be "general purpose," on the assumption that if you trained to the most demanding contingency, usually major war, the lesser missions could also get done. Perhaps, in some cases, this doctrine still holds. But in the twenty-first century it will be necessary both to acquire new capabilities and protect certain parts of the force from debilitating involvement with certain missions.

What we need is not a new structure so much as a new heuristic.

Space Force. As presently constituted, the Air Force cannot effectively maintain and enhance U.S. space supremacy — that is, the ability to exploit freely and protect space-based systems while denying the use of space to others, if necessary. Treaties and other restrictions on these activities need to be revisited, but the internal difficulties are budgetary, institutional, and cultural. From the beginning, the Air Force has been a pilot-dominated service; missilery and satellites have never provided fast-track careers. Moreover, though much of what the Air Force does in space benefits the other services, space appropriations come, for the most part, out of the Air Force share of the budget. In recent years, there has been considerable official rhetoric about the need for cultural change, starting with basic officer training, and about evolving into an "air and space," thence to a "space and air" service. Despite such rhetoric and the ubiquitous misnomer "aerospace" (air and space are different realms with utterly different requirements), it seems unlikely. So unlikely that, in 1999, Congress chartered a Space Commission to report in 2001 on possible alternatives.

One of the commission's possible (perhaps even likely) recommendations might be the establishment within the Air Force of a separate Space Corps, with its own budget line item and ample career opportunities. Over decades, this Space Corps should evolve into a separate Space Service within the Department of the Air Force, as the Marine Corps exists within the Navy Department. The Air Force itself should make a transition as swiftly and prudently as possible into an unmanned force, while maintaining a world-

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class-plus manned force through the next two or three decades. Funding here must be a top priority. Air and space supremacy must never be lost.

Peace Force. Military Operations Other Than War are expensive, exhausting, and require specialized capabilities and assets. Save *in extremis*, combat forces should not be committed to this work. The Army should establish an active/reserve Peace Command, which should provide the military nucleus for a unified Peace Command, akin to the current unified Special Operations Command. These troops should possess adequate combat capabilities for their missions, especially for self-defense. However, the unified Peace Command should make maximum use of non-military assets, including other government agencies, police, foreign capabilities, and professional military companies (PMCs) for routine training and security duties.

Preparing for combat in this high-tech era is a full-time job; preparing for several different kinds of combat requires an unremitting focus.

The rationale here is twofold. First, a Peace Force would provide necessary capabilities in an efficient manner. Second, and just as important, a Peace Force would protect other forces from such assignments. Ongoing deployments consume triple forces: one unit on-site, one preparing to relieve it, and one just back and recovering. Placing 10,000 soldiers in Bosnia, for example, means tying up 30,000. This drain quickly becomes unaffordable and dangerous.

Warriors. As John Hillen puts it, "When they're not training to fight, they should be fighting." Preparing for combat in this high-tech era is a full-time job; preparing for several different kinds of combat requires an unremitting focus and effort. These forces must be protected from lesser distractions. And for the next decade or so, the warriors must both train and transform. Who should make up the warriors? The Army forces, whether rapidly deployable brigades, follow-on units, or combined active/National Guard forces for sustained combat. The Marine Corps, prepared for amphibious assaults and "three block wars"; this is the force that should handle short-term and emergency MOOTW. Marine units afloat, especially in the Mediterranean and the Pacific, have been doing this for decades. The warriors should also include the Air Force's aerospace expeditionary forces and the Navy's combat fleet.

It is true, of course, that in an emergency, we go with what's available. And, just as Peace Forces need combat training and capabilities, warriors need some MOOTW training. But the distinction must be established and maintained.

Guard. This comprises all military homeland defense efforts, excluding air and missile defense and including cyberwar. It involves everything from

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counterterrorism and border control to "consequence management" after attacks. At the moment, homeland defense is a bureaucratic mess, even by Beltway standards. There's a counterterrorism "czar" in the White House. Thirty-some major federal agencies participate in countless activities and task forces. Last year, the Norfolk-based Atlantic Command was redesignated the Joint Forces Command and given responsibility for "support" of civilian authorities. By all accounts, military participation in civilian law enforcement and related activities has been increasing for years.

Nothing makes for trouble like unclear arrangements, and military "mission creep" in domestic affairs is especially pernicious. And the Posse Comitatus Act, passed after the Civil War, forbids military participation in domestic law enforcement. Although much amended in recent years to handle nuclear and terrorist "consequence management," it is still on the books. Therefore, there should be established a Homeland Defense Command, headed by a civilian, with a military deputy and tenacious oversight of civil liberties. To the maximum extent possible, military participation should be limited to the National Guard. At some point, it may be desirable to consider segmenting the Army National Guard into deploying and stay-at-home units. The guard resists this idea ferociously. However, non-deploying units might yield considerable dividends in personnel recruiting and retention. Beyond exceptional circumstances, active combat troops should not be tasked with domestic missions.

Leadership and sacrifice

WERE THE UNITED STATES to withdraw from the world, were we not to care from whom we bought our oil, or what people did to each other, or whether anyone bought our goods, we could get by on far less. Mere retaliatory forces might suffice. Many would hate us, but few would have reason to attack us. Libertarian defense analyst Ivan Eland could possibly be right when he argues that "the best defense is to give no offense." But giving up our leadership role in world affairs would have profound and perilous consequences, both for our nation and for the rest of the world.

When Robert Adams offered his definition of decadence as the deliberate neglect of the essentials of self-preservation, he meant the inability to face a clear and present danger. But what is the clear and present danger today? Many argue that, if history is any guide, there will someday be another war. True enough. Others point to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, death, and disruption. But this country suffers from an even greater danger, of which military decay forms only part. We want the good things we enjoy — a relatively peaceful, stable, and increasingly prosperous world — but we don't like paying what they cost.

Eighty years ago, in *The Revolt of the Masses*, José Ortega y Gasset divid-

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ed humanity into two groups, the aristocrats and the masses. The categories had nothing to do with birth, social status, wealth, or accomplishment. Aristocrats were people who knew that civilization is neither automatic nor self-perpetuating, that it requires effort and sacrifice, and that they were the ones responsible to make that effort and sacrifice. The masses were those who believed that civilization just grew, who showed radical ingratitude for civilization's blessings, who believed that they were not and need not be responsible.

On balance, ours has been an aristocratic nation, responsible for the maintenance and advancement of civilization. Challenges change. Issues come and go. But the need for our military power, in proper and usable quality and quantity, does not. On balance, the world has been the better for our aristocracy. We've made mistakes. We will make mistakes. Certainly, we could use a little instruction in modesty, in the differences between leadership and bullying, and in knowing when to let others be strong. But there is no reason to believe that in the twenty-first century the world's need for our aristocracy, backed by appropriate arms, is any the less. Nor is there any reason to believe that such efforts, properly conducted, will not benefit us as well.

So there *is* a clear and present danger here. It's the failure to remember who and what we are when at our best, and to arm and act accordingly. And that is the decadence that admits and allows all the others.

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How We Won In Vietnam

By VIET D. DINH

THE PAST TWO YEARS have witnessed significant developments in United States policy toward Vietnam. High-level congressional delegations to Vietnam led by Sens. Richard Shelby and Chuck Hagel were followed by a visit by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. This past March, as Vietnam launched a propaganda campaign to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the communist victory, William Cohen became the first American secretary of defense to visit the country since the end of the war. Over the summer, the United States and Vietnam signed a bilateral trade and investment treaty and opened the door to the possibility of full economic normalization — a long way from the U.S.-led international trade embargo against Vietnam that started in 1975. The culmination of these developments was President Clinton's trip this November, the first presidential visit to Vietnam since Richard Nixon in July 1969. For any other country of comparable size and stature, this level of attention would be quite extraordinary.

But of course Vietnam is not just another country of marginal international significance. It is a name that remains deeply ingrained in the American psyche as a not-so-gentle reminder of our fallibility. The attention showered

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on this troubled nation on the other side of the earth to a large extent represents not just an exercise in foreign policy but also a national effort to come to grips with a painful history. It is not only about what we are to do with Vietnam; it is about what we are to think of ourselves.

Former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara touched off a flurry of self-examination with the publication of his book *Argument Without End* in 1999. "Reassessment" and "closure" became the code words in this process of collective therapy.

The dominant theme of the analyses of the twenty-fifth anniversary of war's end (and the thirtieth anniversary of Kent State) was the recounting of American errors and misjudgments throughout the conflict. In some ways, this analysis was an attempt to cure America of the Vietnam syndrome — the lingering fear of combat that inhibits American resolve for foreign intervention. Knowing our mistakes, or at least thinking that we know our mistakes, we can go forth unencumbered by the experience. And acknowledging mistakes facilitates reconciliation — not just between us and our former enemies, but more important, between conflicting parties and among ourselves.

This past April, as a guest of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation, I returned to the country I had fled.

This past April, as a guest of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation, I returned to the country I had fled. The visit was filled with symbolism. The same people who built the Wall as a memorial to those who died in defeat were reaching out to those who lived through victory. And we witnessed some truly remarkable moments: American veterans greeting and at times weeping with Vietnamese veterans; American business leaders advising Vietnamese political leaders on economic policy; Vietnamese groups asking for American help on projects ranging from elementary education to land mine removal.

But it would be premature to herald a new era of good feelings. Beneath the veneer of symbolism lies a more complicated and recalcitrant reality, and significant obstacles lie on the road toward full reconciliation. Also in April, Sen. John McCain took his "Straight Talk Express" to Hanoi. Reminded of his captors' cruel treatment, mindful of the postwar repression by the communist regime, and observing the culture of corruption and mismanagement in Vietnam, McCain declared bluntly, "The wrong side won the war!" When leaders of the New Economy such as AOL founder James Kimsey, investment banker Herbert Allison, and E-Trade chairman Christos Cotsakos urged Vietnamese leaders to make immediate improvements in the legal, economic, and technological infrastructure to enable the country to join the world economy, the communist officials responded with a *20-year* timetable for reforms. And multimillion-dollar offers of free broadband

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Internet infrastructure to educational institutions were met with polite refusals citing the need for government approvals for such projects.

Such disconnect underscores a second reason Vietnam is important to the United States. The country is among the last in the world, along with Cuba, North Korea, and a few others, where the government still steadfastly clings to hard-line communist rule. This claim to ideological purity is precarious, for nearly everywhere else people have recognized democratic capitalism as the path toward a good, free, and just life. As President Clinton recently declared in a speech at the Georgetown University Law Center, "The twentieth century resolved one big question, I believe, conclusively. Humanity's best hope for a future of peace and prosperity lies in free people and free market democracies governed by the rule of law." In this light, Sen. McCain was not entirely correct to say that the wrong side won the war. America and its allies may have lost the battle for Vietnam, but it won the larger and much more important war, the Cold War struggle against communism around the world.

Vietnam thus remains important to the United States because it represents one of the last venues for the battle of ideas between democratic capitalism and totalitarian communism to play itself out. Engaging with postwar Vietnam diplomatically and economically serves the same purpose as military intervention during the conflict. That purpose, now as then, is to promote U.S. strategic interests, as well as respect for the rights of man and the betterment of life for people anywhere.

But there is one crucial difference. The United States and its allies have already triumphed in the global battle of ideas. The success or failure of our effort to draw Vietnam into the community of democratic nations will not affect that victory. Unlike the 1960s and 1970s, whatever happens in Vietnam now will not have calamitous collateral effects on our global foreign policy objectives. Thus, the paradox of Vietnam: In the years since we lost the war, we have won it.

The meaning of containment

First, some historical perspective on the purposes and context of the war. The rhetoric of the Vietnam War was containment. For decades after the fall of Saigon, antiwar commentators seized upon that rhetoric and belittled its attendant domino theory to argue against the wisdom of the war. After Vietnam (and Cambodia and Laos) fell, so goes the argument, communism did not spread throughout the region. Therefore, the war was unnecessary and ill-advised — and, lacking in moral purpose, was arguably unjust. But the Vietnam War had implications far outside the country, the region, or the reach of falling dominoes. It reflected a larger strategy of maintaining an alliance system against communism.

Underlying the theory of containment, as outlined in George Kennan's famous "long telegram," were two basic propositions. First, the communist

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bloc was monolithic and thus presented a menace without breaks or fissures. Second, just as that monolith was unbroken, so too must the Western line of containment permit no breach. As fissures became apparent within the communist bloc, most notably between the Soviet Union and China, and the first proposition proved untrue, the policy prescription needed to be revised to the extent that it predicted a catastrophic end should there be a breach in the line of containment. That does not mean, however, that the second proposition needed to be, or was, rejected in toto. As Henry Kissinger argued in an influential essay at the time, regardless of the wisdom of the initial decision to intervene in Vietnam, continued involvement was undoubtedly in the U.S. interest once a half million troops were on the ground: American credibility was at stake.

The argument that our involvement was a mistake rests on the assumption that the democratic alliance was unnecessary.

Thus — as the commentators from Stratfor.com, an influential U.S.-based private intelligence gathering firm, noted in a cogent analysis — Vietnam was not only about containment of the "red menace," but presented a test of the credibility of American commitment and resolve. The strategy was to encircle the communist bloc in a web of alliances secured by American promises of assistance — financial, military, and, if necessary, nuclear. John F. Kennedy inaugurated his presidency by announcing what came to be the Kennedy Doctrine: a promise to "pay any price, bear any burden, . . . support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty." Like any unenforceable promise, the value of the American commitment depended wholly on our delivering when called upon.

Vietnam was such a call. As Arthur R. Schlesinger Jr. recounts in *A Thousand Days*, Kennedy "undoubtedly felt" that "an American retreat in Asia might upset the whole world balance." That threat to the world balance comes not from a fanciful notion that Southeast Asia would become a breach in the fence through which communism would spread throughout the free world. Rather, the threat came from a fear that the entire fence (or significant parts of it — say, Europe), woven together by American alliances and commitments, would unravel if the allies saw that America's commitments weren't worth the paper they were written on.

The argument that our involvement in Vietnam was a mistake rests ultimately on the assumption that the democratic alliance was unnecessary to defeat communism or that the alliance would not have unraveled had America not intervened in Vietnam — in other words, an assumption that the grand strategy itself was ill-conceived. But let us remember that the grand strategy ultimately worked. Vietnam, despite the military defeat, was a demonstration of U.S. credibility and resolve in the larger global struggle

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against communism. It was a demonstration that, in the final analysis, may have contributed to American success in the Cold War or, at the least, prevented our failure.

To be sure, U.S. withdrawal from and cessation of assistance to South Vietnam, which precipitated the communist victory in 1975, sorely tested the value of the American commitment and accordingly the strength of the Western alliance. Hanoi's victory in Southeast Asia led the American people and U.S. allies to question the United States' willingness or institutional political ability to "pay any price, bear any burden" to fight communism. These were uncertain times for those relying on the United States. But those who would look to the outcome of the war to argue that U.S. involvement in Vietnam was unnecessary bear the burden of showing, counterfactually, that a U.S. failure to respond to the situation in Vietnam as early as Kennedy's administration would have had no impact on the collective alliance against communism. At the time, Charles de Gaulle and other European leaders were openly questioning the value of guarantees from America to act against immediate self-interest by fighting communism in situations that did not pose a direct threat to American security. If 58,000 American lives, billions of dollars, and decades of domestic turmoil still did not erase doubts about the U.S. commitment, imagine how those doubts would have been expressed had the United States blithely ignored a call on its guarantee. And, let us not forget, the policy of appeasement prompted by war-weary malaise of the 1970s did not win the Cold War. Vigilance during the 1980s did, a point relevant to current United States-Vietnam policy to which I will return.

Lest we forget, the policy of appeasement prompted by war-weary malaise of the 1970s did not win the Cold War.

Recognizing that Vietnam was not an isolated defeat but rather part of an honorable and ultimately successful struggle for freedom and prosperity gives due credit to the contribution of our principal ally during this struggle, the Republic of Vietnam. It refutes the notion that South Vietnamese were mere pawns for or puppets of the United States — a charge frequently made by antiwar protesters in order to portray U.S. intervention as unjust. Nothing could be further from the truth. The South Vietnamese fought the war and sought U.S. help because they believed in the same principles of freedom and democracy for which America was the beacon. They included the hundreds of thousands of North Vietnamese, my father's family among them, who constituted the one-way exodus from the north when the country was partitioned in 1954 — driven from their homes by fears of communist rule and the hope of a good, free life. Those hopes led the South Vietnamese to fight for what remained of their homeland and, in the case of a quarter

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million of them, to give their lives to the cause.

More important from the U.S. perspective, this recognition also validates the sacrifices of American soldiers who fought, suffered, and died for the same cause. Such validation, nay, honor, is natural for any country that sends its young to war, but has long been withheld by people mired in anti-war ideology and confused by protest rhetoric. Former Secretary of the Navy James Webb, a combat marine in Vietnam and an expert chronicler of the soldier's experience, poignantly made the point in a *Wall Street Journal* essay on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the war's end:

> [H]istory owes something to those who went to Vietnam, and to the judgment of those who believed the endeavor was worthwhile. We can still debate whether the war was worth its cost, but the evidence of the past 25 years clearly upholds the validity of our intentions. This proposition may sound simple, but to advance it is to confront the Gordian knot of the Vietnam era itself.

The evidence of the past 25 years to which Webb refers is indeed the best illustration that the United States, despite the military defeat, prevailed in the larger struggle for a future of peace and prosperity through democratic capitalism. Days after the fall of Saigon, Stanley Hoffman wrote in the May 3, 1975 issue of the *New Republic*: "In this respect Vietnam should teach us an important lesson. On the one hand Hanoi is one of several among the poorest nations in the world that have tried or will try to create a collectivist society, based on principles that are repugnant to us, yet likely to produce greater welfare and security for its people than any local alternative ever offered, at a cost in freedom that affects a small elite." Tell that to the millions of Cambodians who lost their lives in the killing fields as a sacrifice at the altar of one-step collectivism. Or to the hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese, my father among them, who were sent to "re-education camps" after the war, where many of them perished. Or to the families and relatives of South Vietnamese considered suspect by the Hanoi government and thus deprived of access to the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. Or tell it to the millions of Vietnamese, my family among them, who found communist persecution unbearable and took to the high seas in a diaspora of anything that floated.

Most relevantly, tell that to the people of Vietnam who lived under communist rule throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Instead of welfare and security, what they got was repression of all basic freedoms; dire poverty caused by central economic mismanagement and official corruption; and a government so bellicose that, during the early 1980s, it continued to build up its military even as its people suffered the most severe drought of the country's recorded history.

It would be wise for us to keep the brutality of the communist regime in mind as we confront Vietnam's wavering efforts at economic liberalization. For a casual apologist or a strict isolationist, the response would be easy, if

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misguided. But those who believe in change through constructive engagement must walk a tightrope to ensure that our efforts serve our ultimate goals — a free people and free market democracy governed by the rule of law, a Vietnam which enjoys the peace and prosperity we have helped to secure elsewhere in the world.

Continuing the effort

In 1986, prompted by the withdrawal of foreign aid by a Soviet Union undergoing perestroika, Vietnam began a fitful effort at market reforms. The country began to look to foreigners for the capital investments necessary to jump-start the badly mismanaged economy. And it has made a conscious effort toward regional and international cooperation, joining the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and applying to accede to the World Trade Organization.

The Vietnamese government is traveling on this journey less as willing (but begrudging) companion than as a stowaway. The hesitation stems from the government's contradictory desire to liberalize the economy, a step necessary to stem the country's slide into the ranks of the world's poorest nations, while at the same time maintain fealty to communist ideology, which is essential to the party's monopoly on power. The efforts at legal and economic reform are fitful and their success correspondingly sporadic because the government is confronting the fundamental paradox of its policy: Can capitalist economics coexist with communist rule?

The program of reform and renovation, *doi moi*, began at the Sixth Communist Party Congress in December 1986. The next two years were chaos. Although the government had decisively abandoned its system of total economic command and control, there was no clear replacement. Severe macroeconomic imbalances ensued. The budget deficit swelled to 10 percent of gross domestic product. Savings were negative, and the value of exports was less than half the import bill for 1988. Inflation was well into three digits, hovering between 300 and 500 percent per year from 1986 to 1988.

It was not until March 1989 that Vietnam significantly departed from the old Stalinist-Maoist model of economic development. At last, official price controls were abolished, and consumer goods sold through state outlets were priced at the free (black) market level. The *dong* was devalued drastically to bring the official rate in line with the prevailing market rate. The government abandoned official allocation of resources and planning targets and granted state enterprises more autonomy. The Seventh Communist Party Congress in 1991 sanctioned a path toward economic reform, and the government prodigiously drafted legislation designed to facilitate the transition to a market economy — the Civil Code, the Law on Private Enterprises,

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the Company Law, the Law on Land, the Law on Foreign Investment, and the Bankruptcy Law. The government also reorganized its bureaucracy to improve efficiency and curb corruption. Styled as an effort to "smooth the country's transition to a market economy," Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet merged eight government bodies into three "superministries" in October 1995 — including the Ministry of Planning and Investment, officially created "to improve the environment for foreign investors." The fervor for reform was so dramatic that Do Muoi, then secretary general of the Communist Party, in early 1996 declared, "Our present slogan must be capital, capital, and more capital."

The economy responded favorably to the package of reforms. Real GDP growth steadily increased, and inflation, after its peak in 1988, came under control. The world community greeted Vietnam's reform effort with enthusiasm. The IMF resumed lending in October 1993, and the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank soon followed suit. The United States in 1995 lifted its 20-year embargo on trade and later that year normalized diplomatic relations. Foreign investors — casting their gaze on Vietnam through glasses tinted rosy by history and symbolism — rushed in. In 1996, foreign direct investment totaled $8.3 billion, or more than a third of the country's GDP.

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But reform gave way to retrenchment. Much of the renovation program is predicated upon ideas, such as the recognition of property and commercial rights, that challenge traditional communist ideology. Hard-liners insisted on a dominant state role in determining future economic development, and, indeed, even during the 1986-95 reform period, the state sector increased its share of GDP relative to the private sector. In early 1996, the government instituted a campaign denouncing "cultural pollution" and the "quiet revolution" by foreign diplomatic and business interests. The party vowed that the country would not "stray onto the capitalist path" and recommended that the state sector approximately double its share of GDP to 60 percent in the next 25 years. The Eighth Party Congress in June 1996 signaled the continuing shift of power away from reformers toward more hard-line conservatives. The size of the politburo was expanded, and the number of members with military backgrounds increased from four to six.

In November 1999, the party used its anticorruption campaign to purge top-level officials who were outspoken advocates of reform. The highest ranking official sacked was the deputy prime minister, who had complained that "all state corporations do is sit on their behinds and demand further support and protectionism" and advocated accelerated privatization of state-owned enterprises. The same day as the purge, leaders made their first

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statements about an impasse on the bilateral trade agreement Vietnam and the United States had been negotiating since 1995.

The U.S.-Vietnam trade agreement would serve American business interests by opening up a market of 80 million people to more liberalized trade and investment. It would also advance American diplomatic interests by establishing firmer ties to a country bordering China. For Vietnam, an agreement promises an enhanced standard of living for its people by increasing productive capacity through foreign investments and providing easier access to cheaper and higher quality imports. Vietnam would also be able to export to the United States more products currently encumbered by high tariffs. The World Bank estimates that, in the first year of normal trade relations, apparel exports would increase tenfold from 1999 levels, to $384 million, and overall Vietnamese exports to the United States would double, to $1.3 billion. In July 1999, negotiators reached accord and signed an agreement in principle, which was to have been finalized at a September 1999 ceremony during the APEC meeting in Australia. The politburo balked, however, and the signing ceremony was cancelled at the last minute.

The bilateral agreement threatened the fundamental ideology of the conservative Vietnamese leadership.

The reason is simple: The bilateral trade agreement threatened the fundamental ideology of the conservative Vietnamese leadership and its hold on power. The agreement was a comprehensive accord with detailed provisions for all trade and services sectors and specific guarantees against appropriation of U.S. investments in Vietnam. It also contained a firm timetable for implementation. Such widespread reform would significantly reduce the scope and economic influence of state-owned enterprises and thus diminish the control (and opportunity for graft) of the party, specifically of its politically powerful and ideologically conservative military. It would require reform of the inefficient state banking system, long the subsidizer of stagnant state-owned enterprises. And the agreement would open the gates to an influx of foreign products and professionals, thus introducing "social evils" dangerous to communist solidarity and heightening fears of a quiet revolution by foreign interests. It would also have exposed Vietnam to the strong currents of international currency flows, the hazards of which had recently been demonstrated in the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Conservatives saw currency instability as a further threat to party control.

Foreign investors' response to these developments in politics and policy was dramatic. In January 2000, foreign direct investments dropped to 1992 levels. And the November 2000 issue of the official *Vietnam Investment Review* (which, incidentally, has lost its foreign financial backing) reported that for the first 10 months of 2000, foreign direct investment was half the amount for the comparable period in 1999 and thus "is still at a record

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yearly low." Earlier this year, the *Economist* chronicled this "rags to riches to rags story" and bid in its title, "Goodnight, Vietnam."

In July, perhaps in response to the continuing slide, Vietnam capitulated and signed the bilateral trade agreement. Whether the agreement will be ratified by Congress and the National Assembly and whether it will be implemented according to its timetable remain to be seen. The struggle within the Hanoi government shows no sign of having been resolved.

From bullets to ideas

If this analysis appears to resemble old-time Kremlinology, that is because it does. But there is a larger theme. The conservative Vietnamese leadership's resistance to economic and legal reforms and its fear of a quiet revolution illustrate its recognition that current relations with the United States are part of the same struggle between democratic capitalism and totalitarian communism that once took the form of war — a war the communists thought they had won. But the military struggle has been transformed into one over economic and social influence. The current questions of reform are the new battlegrounds.

In this belief, the leadership is correct — just as the North Vietnamese generals were correct that the Vietnam war was not simply a military conflict, that it had to be fought in American domestic politics as well as on the battlefield. Indeed, Vietnam has acknowledged that it lost 1.4 million soldiers during the war, compared to 58,000 Americans and 250,000 South Vietnamese. Victory came only when the United States, weary of the war effort, withdrew troops from Vietnam and the Congress in 1974 denied $800 million in essential military aid to the Republic of Vietnam.

What, then, should be the policy objective of the United States toward Vietnam today? Just as Vietnam has recognized that further economic reforms pose a threat to communist power, the United States should recognize that it is engaged in battle on the final front of the advance of democratic capitalism. Just as the North Vietnamese generals saw the relevance of American politics to the Vietnam war, our diplomats should view United States policy toward Vietnam as an effort not simply to define relations between the two countries, but also to touch the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people and to nudge the government onto the path toward democratic capitalism.

This is not a war of bullets and bombs, but a battle of ideas and institutions. The Clinton administration deserves credit for negotiating a tough trade and investment treaty and for resisting Vietnamese intransigence in the process. The next administration needs to continue this work and ensure that the agreement is ratified and will be implemented fully according to its strict timetable. Completion of this process would provide the stable, transparent, and accountable economic infrastructure necessary for Vietnam's continued progression toward a market-oriented economy.

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But free markets are only half of the ideal of democratic capitalism; free peoples are the other half. In the West, we have the privilege of academic debate over the meaning of terms such as political expression, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press. Often our scholars conclude that these principles cannot be objectively determined in a manner satisfactory to all peoples. And the attempts of our legal experts to define them with a precision adjudicable (if not enforceable) by international judges bring justifiable snickers from tough-minded diplomats. But there can be no doubt that these principles have been grossly violated by the Vietnamese communist regime. In the final fronts of the struggle against totalitarianism, the rights of man take on their core meaning and essential importance.

Amorphous notions of political expression have real significance in a regime that punished enemies through a process of reeducation that often blurred with eradication; that unfailingly imprisons those who have the courage to suggest an alternative to the official line; and that thwarts any effort, however meager or ineffectual, at social organization. Freedom of religion begins to sound concrete when religious leaders are persecuted and imprisoned and their followers immolate themselves in vain protest. And freedom of the press becomes more than a slogan in a climate where a newspaper sponsored by the state, as all publications are, is shut down because it dared suggest that people are "worried and sad" that the government banned firecrackers during Tet (lunar new year) celebrations.

Never mind that all of these freedoms are nominally protected by Vietnam's constitution. Their exercise is punishable because it violates the more significant constitutional provision conferring a monopoly of power on the Communist Party. The United States must take a hard line on Vietnam's abuse of its people, because this is the very essence of the struggle.

The typical Vietnamese response to foreign insistence that the country respect the rights of its people, a claim that these demands are an intrusion on domestic sovereignty, rings hollow. The Vietnamese leadership out of necessity has abandoned its Marxist-Leninist ideal of command and control collectivism. It now simply clings to political control. The same vigilance and pressure that dragged Vietnam onto the path toward a market economy need to be applied to weaken its grip on totalitarian authority.

To keep in sight that we are continuing a larger effort for democracy and capitalism is to protect against erosion of core American ideals through the process of engagement. It is to work so that the Vietnamese people see the promise of freedom and democratic political expression in an economy and society protected by the rule of law.

Equally important for our own nation, such a recognition will put the Vietnam war into the proper, broader historical perspective. It will help to heal the lingering wounds of that sad era and lead Americans to realize that their soldiers did not die in vain, that their veterans are deserving of honor and gratitude, and that their triumphant ideals and institutions were and are worth fighting for.

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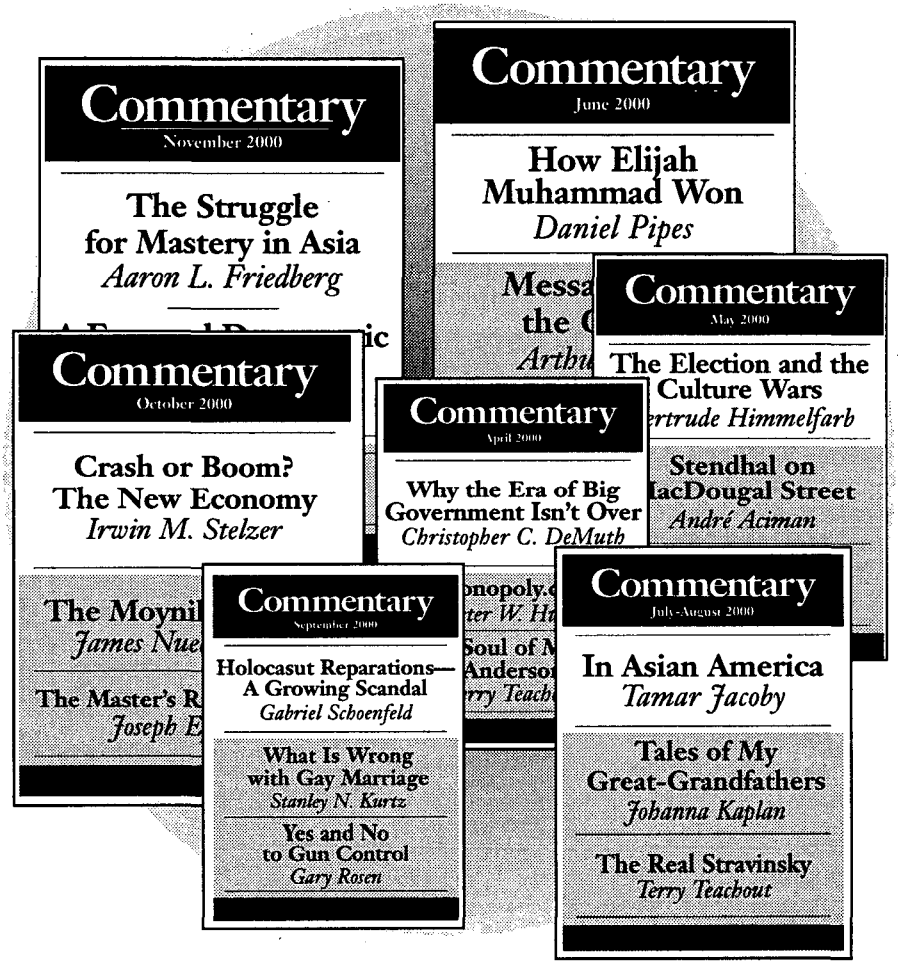

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Denmark, the Euro, And Fear of the Foreign

By HENRIK BERING

WHEN READING ABOUT their country in the international press, most people like to see themselves described in a favorable light. In the case of Denmark, the national self-image includes the Royal Ballet, Hans Cristian Andersen, fairy-tale castles, a popular queen, and a tolerant and well-educated population. A classic poster in Copenhagen shows a policeman holding up traffic to allow a duck and her ducklings to cross the street. So when the average Dane suddenly finds himself portrayed not as the easygoing humanitarian of his self-perception, but as timid, small-minded, and racist to boot, he is likely to choke on his pastry.

This has been the case lately, as Denmark found itself front page news worldwide in connection with its referendum Sept. 28 on whether to give up its national currency, the krone, in favor of full participation in the European Monetary Union. In a closely watched vote thought to provide auguries for the future of the troubled euro, which has lost more than 30 percent of its value against the dollar since it was introduced in January 1999, Denmark voted "no," 53 percent to 47 percent.

According to a national survey taken after the vote, 37 percent of those who voted "no" favored less integration with the rest of Europe, which is now well embarked on a project of greater transnational integration not only through the European Central Bank in Frankfurt but especially through the European Union in Brussels. Twenty-three percent of those voting "no" explicitly cited a lack of confidence in the European Union. But another 33 percent gave as their reason for voting "no" their concern about preserving

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"Danish identity." And that, especially, is where the international trouble begins, because concerns about "national identity" do not sit at all well with the cosmopolitan sensibility prevalent in the capitals of the new Europe.

This is not the first time Danes have taken to the polls to deliver a rebuke to full-speed-ahead European integration. In 1992, Danes voted "no" even more narrowly to the Maastricht Treaty, which created the EU. Then, the foreign reaction was very different. Danes were treated like heroes for sending a message to the politicians in Brussels that they were out of step with the populations of Europe and going too far towards centralization. By their vote, they forced Europe to make some useful corrections in its political ambitions, which in turn paved the way for Denmark's approval (with certain reservations) of the Maastricht treaty in 1993.

This time, however, the analysis has been unforgiving. An article in the *New York Times* shortly before the vote averred that the Danes had become suspicious, inward-looking, and fearful of outside influence, including the EU's. Danes have grown worried about open borders and hordes of immigrants for whom Denmark is "a giant buffet table" asking everybody to come and help himself, as one politician put it. The German weekly *Der Spiegel* was even harsher, claiming that Danes are more racist than the Austrian nationalist leader Jörg Haider in their hatred of foreigners: "The thoughts that recently brought Freedom Party leader Jörg Haider into European discredit have partly become the law in Denmark." Whereupon the magazine, in typically breathless style, went on to offer a nightmarish description of the conditions in which immigrants supposedly live in Denmark. The negative publicity this time has been especially painful for a nation that for decades has been proclaiming the wonders of its welfare state and regularly lecturing others, notably the United States, on how to deal with everything from racial problems and poverty to Third World debt and energy conservation.

The euro campaign as proxy

BUT WHAT, really, does fear of foreigners have to do with the euro? On the surface, not a thing. And yet in the recent referendum, everything.

The referendum was meant to cement 18 years of Danish fixed-rate currency policy, whereby the Danish krone has been tied to the German mark (since January 1999, to the euro). Accepting the euro would mean lower transaction costs for Danish industry, lower interest rates, and an end to exchange rate uncertainty.

Support among Danish elite opinion was overwhelming. About 80 percent of Danish members of parliament were in favor — including not only the governing center-left coalition of Social Democratic Prime Minister Paul Nyrup Rasmussen, but also the main opposition parties, the Liberals and the

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Conservatives. In all, 46 of the country's 48 newspapers favored a "yes" vote on the euro, as did most trade unions and employers' organizations. Nor was this mere passive support. Danes were inundated with pronouncements in favor of the euro from officials of all kinds.

But there was a grave problem with the euro referendum — namely, that one would have to look hard for a more unsuitable question to put to a popular vote. It turned on the arcana of monetary policy and the murky world of central bankers. Currency questions are among the more rarefied aspects of economics, and these are not easily accessible to the man on the street. Moreover, a large part of the Danish population works for or is supported by the state, so their connection to the world of market economics has been severed. An often voiced complaint was that the public did not have enough information. That is nonsense. There was plenty of information, perhaps even too much.

One would have to look hard for a more unsuitable question to put to a popular vote.

So it was that rather than vote on something they did not understand, Danes turned the referendum into something everybody could have an opinion on. The euro question became a proxy debate about foreigners and the future of the Danish welfare state.

The most prominent of the antieuro crusaders was the Danish People's Party, under the flamboyant leadership of Pia Kjaersgaard. The People's Party demands a halt to all immigration and is opposed to participation in the EU. The party consists mainly of blue-collar workers and the elderly, many of them former Social Democrats who think their old party went too far on immigration. Indeed, the way some of them speak, one might get the impression that they think Africa starts at Krusaa, right at the German-Danish border. Notwithstanding the nativist sentiment, the party has neither historical nor organizational ties to fascist or neo-Nazi movements.

The People's Party presented the euro as a step towards further integration (which of course it is), and with it, the increased meddling in the internal questions of the member states, to the point of imminent repression of those daring to disagree with the Brussels line. People who expressed reservations about immigration would inevitably end up with dossiers on their subversive sentiments in some EU archive, party leaders alleged.

But the "no" campaign made for strange political bedfellows. Also staunchly opposed was the intellectual left. During the Cold War, the Danish left had two enemies. One was NATO and the United States. (Indeed, Denmark became known as a "footnote country" in the last years of the Cold War: No NATO policy statement was complete without a footnote expressing Danish reservations concerning what all other alliance members agreed to.) The left's other enemy was Europe.

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And since there has been no price to pay for being on the wrong side in the Cold War, the same people have just carried on their work in undermining the EU as if nothing had happened. The theme has been the same — the portrayal of the EU as a club of the rich. So was the strategy: the use of supposedly broad-based popular movements, in which members of the hard left occupy the key positions — vintage Soviet-front organization style.

Together, this odd grouping of left and right launched a scare campaign, propagating the myth that the Danish welfare state was somehow threatened by the introduction of the euro. According to the propaganda, faceless Brussels bureaucrats were set to strip the country of the generous social welfare system so many Danes prize as a necessary humane supplement to market capitalism.

To the sharp and misleading attacks from the "no" side can be added an incompetent showing by the "yes" side.

To the sharp and misleading attacks from the "no" side can be added an incompetent showing by the "yes" side. The Rasmussen government made all the mistakes a government could. Instead of a short and snappy referendum period, with sharply defined themes, the prime minister chose a seven-month marathon debate that allowed everything to be turned into mush.

As time progressed and a "no" vote looked increasingly likely, the prime minister became increasingly desperate. At the very last moment, the government pulled out all the stops, issuing guarantees on social welfare policy right and left. By the end, it was all but promising that the welfare state would continue as-is for eternity. The result was that Rasmussen looked cheap, willing to promise anything.

A development on the international scene also proved unfortunate for the "yes" side. The euro referendum coincided with sanctions brought against Austria, where the ultraright party of Jörg Haider had entered into a governing coalition with the conservatives. Without being in sympathy with Haider, who has made a number of appalling comments about the labor policies of the Third Reich and the Waffen SS, many Danes felt that an overly intrusive EU was ganging up on one of its members on an unfair and illegal basis — and one that would end up strengthening Haider rather than weakening him. The sanctions were dropped just before the referendum, but the damage to the "yes" side had been done. Swedish Prime Minister Goeran Persson, whose country will take over the EU chairmanship from France at the end of the year, likewise hinted that he might focus his attention on Denmark: that a possible future center-right government with participation of the Danish People's Party might trigger sanctions from other European countries.

Recriminations began immediately after the defeat. The woolly incompe-

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tence of the Rasmussen government bears much of the responsibility, but more generally speaking, the whole of the pro-EU side, including the Liberal Party and the Conservatives, deserve a share of the blame.

Rather than setting out their own vision of what Europe should become, they allowed themselves to be tricked into accepting the premises of their opponents — namely, that Europe is basically bad for you. They therefore spent an immense amount of time seeking to reassure voters that economics has nothing to do with politics, and that there would be no further integration — both of which assertions are patently absurd. This means they are caught out every time the EU conjures up some new initiative, good or bad.

As for the consequences for Denmark, this time, the country has gone a footnote too far. In the past, according to former Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, Danish reservations about EMU were respected because it was felt that eventually Denmark would sign up with the euro. This is no longer the case. Denmark has shown that it really does want to limit its participation in the European venture.

Accordingly, it will become relegated to B-team status — to the relief of many EU members, who find the Danish attitude a right royal pain. Danes will now be regarded as a country of village idiots — quaint little people who engage in clog dancing and eat pork rinds, as one Danish paper put it rather bitterly.

As for the rest of Europe, the Danish referendum result will probably delay Sweden's joining the euro; EU skepticism there mirrors that in Denmark. Britain, where anti-EU sentiment runs even stronger, will also postpone its participation. The result will be a European Union in two speeds, in which core countries move ahead with common projects and the others are left behind. This scenario was precisely what the Danish government has long sought to avoid, out of the entirely plausible concern that it will mean less influence for the smaller countries.

The irony here is that the krone will, of course, still be tied to the euro. The only difference is that Danish policy makers will not have a say in the deliberations of the European Central Bank. In other words, rather than gaining influence over their own affairs, by having said "no," Danes have lost it.

Immigration

THE REFERENDUM revealed a Danish electorate that is timid, cautious, and suspicious. In addition, it revealed that the Rasmussen government is singularly inept. The question remains whether the Danes are also racist, as the foreign newspapers suggested.

"In Denmark, you will find xenophobes just like you find them in other countries," says former Foreign Minister Ellemann-Jensen. "But it is not the 53 percent of the population that voted no to the euro. Rather, 15 or 20 per-

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cent, which of course we will have to deal with. But Denmark still remains a country where it is believed that one should treat each other and foreigners correctly."

Denmark has, in point of fact, been in the vanguard of European efforts to integrate immigrant populations with the native-born. The country has a comprehensive law of integration that spells out the rights and the responsibilities of refugees and immigrants. When a foreigner is admitted to Denmark, he automatically qualifies for a host of benefits, including free health care, schooling, job training, etc. The state must also provide him with an apartment within three months of his acceptance. (Nor is immigration the only policy area that indicates Danish engagement with "others." For example, Denmark spends 1 percent of its GNP on foreign aid, the highest per capita in the world.)

Denmark has been in the vanguard of European efforts to integrate immigrant populations with the native-born.

Rather than racism, Danish policy on refugees and immigration can be characterized by naïveté and good intentions gone sour. Much of the recent unpleasantness finds its root in the enthusiasm of Danish intellectuals in the 1970s and 1980s for Third World causes.

The Danish left transferred the almost mythical qualities that it had bestowed on "the worker" in the 1960s and '70s to "the foreigner" in the 1980s and '90s. The Third World foreigner was the innocent victim of Western exploitation, unspoiled by the crass materialism of the West, possessed of a more intuitive understanding of life, more in touch with nature, etc. The romanticized portrait allowed little room for the reality of the challenges of immigrant life and integration. And when reality asserted itself, disillusionment set in. Danish immigration policies are thus a cautionary tale of political arrogance — the belief that one can simply transplant people from very different parts of the globe and expect them to become instant Danes. Disillusionment is exactly what results when political desires and social engineering tendencies ignore experience and history and are suddenly confronted with the consequences.

The history of immigration in Denmark is short and recent. Like all Western nations, the population of Denmark has been graying. The birth rate remains too low to lift the burden of the aging baby-boomers. That creates a demand for more workers. After a start letting in so-called "guest-workers" in the booming 1960s, in the 1980s Denmark again opened up. Many people came from Turkey and Pakistan, others from the Middle East, including many Palestinians. Today, foreigners number 378,000, about 7 percent of the population of 5.2 million.

For a long time, it was received wisdom that the newcomers would assimilate. But Danes have found to their surprise and horror that this is not what

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has happened: Rather than assimilation, there have been anger and resentment amid regular culture clashes.

In the past, whenever local politicians who were saddled with the practical everyday consequences of government policy warned that things were going in the wrong direction, they were ignored or labeled racist. Today there is a dawning realization in Denmark that integration has failed. Indeed, two landmark reports prepared by the widely respected Rockwool Foundation, "Immigration in Denmark: International and National Perspectives" (1999) and "Failed Integration? The Immigrants' Encounter with the Job Market and the Welfare State" (2000), have described the dimensions of the failure. As an indication of the mainstream character of this new concern over integration, the latter includes a postscript by the economics minister, Marianne Jelved, whose party is the junior coalition partner in Rasmussen's government. This issue is one many Danes would prefer not to face, but that is becoming impossible.

Denmark has always had an underclass. But it was never "them" to the broader Danish "us." Now, thanks to relatively high levels of immigration combined with failed integration policies, Denmark has a new underclass set apart by and viewed in terms of skin color. If Danes had known their Tocqueville, which they did not, they would have known that this is a recipe for trouble.

Resistance to multiculturalism

THE FRUSTRATION LEVEL was clearly illustrated in the middle of the euro campaign, when the Social Democratic interior minister, Karen Jespersen, a former 1960s radical, suddenly engaged the debate on foreigners in Denmark. The minister suggested isolating refugees with criminal records on a "deserted island," and she further stated that she "did not wish to live in" a multicultural nation "where the cultures were considered equal."

The international reactions were fast and furious. Beate Winkler, the director of the European Center for the Monitoring of Racism and Xenophobia in Vienna, which had been heavily involved in the Haider case in Austria, stated that she regarded Jespersen's statements as "deeply problematical," even hinting that Denmark might be in for unfavorable mention in the center's yearly report. Winkler's pronouncement was followed by the judgment of a French member of the European Parliament, the Senegal-born Fode Sylla, who stated, "I have not seen coarser and more racially motivated ideas for a long time. Denmark is becoming worse than Austria in its treatment of foreigners."

The minister's choice of words on the desirability of a "deserted island" was indeed awful, conjuring up visions of the island fortress in *The Count of Monte Cristo* (escape is hopeless; the cemetery of the Chateau d'If is the

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sea!). As anyone with even a passing acquaintance with the Danish legal and penal system knows, this is not how people are treated, no matter how criminal.

Yet what made the minister resort to talk of "deserted islands" was an unintended consequence of Denmark's liberal refugee policies, according to which entry is granted to anyone who requests asylum at the border. For years, this intended generosity toward those facing persecution at home has been misused by criminals who see Denmark as an easy target — including members of organized crime from the former Soviet Union, especially Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the Ukraine. They have no real hope of becoming Danish nor a desire to do so. Operating out of the refugee centers while their applications for asylum are being processed, they prey on the local population. Some have even been caught sending huge parcels of stolen goods back to their home countries. This, of course, is highly visible activity, and it contributes to suspicion against foreigners. Now attempts will be made to shorten the process of deciding asylum claims, which currently take about six months.

When people start talking about denying women access to the labor market or the right to divorce, those are fighting words.

But it is really the second part of Jespersen's statement, that she did not want to live in a multicultural state where the cultures are deemed equal, that is the more interesting. This was made in response to far-fetched but serious demands from militant Muslims that Denmark be turned into an Islamic state and that key elements of Islamic law, the Shari'a, be introduced as part of Danish law — such things as the death penalty and mutilation for theft.

Now, Danish Social Democrats are not really high on mutilation, let alone the death penalty. But that may not have been the worst of it. For a lifelong women's rights activist like Jespersen, when people start talking about denying women access to the labor market or the right to divorce — to say nothing of the practice of arranged marriages — those are fighting words. On this, there can be no compromise. The minister was backed up by the Social Democratic Party Congress, which stated in its political platform for the next four years: "We do not accept religious traditions and attitudes that are in conflict with the basic values in Danish society, where all people have inalienable rights. Men and women must be treated as equals."

One of the key mistaken assumptions made by various Danish governments was that after a generation, the children of the newcomers would assimilate, marry Danish girls, and become jolly Danes themselves. In fact, rather than marrying locally, most Turks, 95 percent in Rockwool's reckoning, still import a Turkish wife even in the third generation. In fact, many Turks feel an obligation to help cousins back in the ancestral village get out

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through arranged marriages. That means that the process of assimilation starts all over again, beginning with language. It is back to square one every time.

One consequence has been ghettoization. Denmark has its own version of "white flight." When the influx of foreigners reaches a certain point, Danes move elsewhere in order to avoid sending their children to the local schools. Certain parts of Copenhagen and Odense are now Little Istanbuls or Gaza Strips.

Because of the poor language abilities and work habits of many foreigners, employers are reluctant to hire them. As a result of unemployment, the father, the traditional seat of authority in Islamic families, often loses the respect of his children. The result has been a sharp increase in crime among second generation immigrants — to the extent that in the public mind, the word crime now brings to mind the image of a foreigner.

Immigration and the failure of integration have been staggeringly expensive, a tremendous strain on the welfare state.

A rash of gang rapes over the past year has caused particular consternation. In one highly publicized case, seven Palestinian youths who were accused of gang-raping a teenage girl got off with extremely light sentences — three months — and were seen celebrating afterwards. In other cases, people who faced deportation for severe crimes have been allowed to stay. The Danish courts still seem to be stuck in the political activism of the 1970s, sending all the wrong messages and undermining general respect for the law.

Finally, there are the financial costs. Immigration and the failure of integration have been staggeringly expensive, a tremendous strain on the welfare state. A minority of 4 percent of the population — that is, non-Western immigrants — accounts for fully 34 percent of the Danish social budget. People who have paid a lifetime of the highest taxes in the world to secure themselves a happy old age now find waiting lists to get into the hospital and increasingly poor social services. When the Danish prime minister recently asked Danes whether, for all their grumbling, they would really like to live elsewhere, many were tempted to confound the prime minister's certitude and say yes.

There have been some legislative efforts to address the problems. One new law seeks to bar immigrants under 25 years of age from bringing a foreign spouse into Denmark. This is done expressly to prevent arranged marriages: Older, more mature immigrants, it is believed, are less likely to give in to the dictates of family and custom. And renewed efforts have been made on the language front. Some welfare payments are now tied to a willingness to learn Danish.

What many Danes fear is that the virus of political correctness will spread

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to Denmark — in fact, it already has — and that therefore it will become impossible to discuss problems like these candidly. But the impulse felt by many Danes to retain the right to call barbarism by its proper name is not evil or racist. Rape remains rape, no matter who commits it.

The Danes' rejection of the euro was indeed bound up with apprehensions about the consequences of immigration, as the international press portrayed. But these concerns are well founded, a product of growing awareness of the ill effects wrought by a naive immigration policy, overgenerous social welfare benefits, and a failure to enforce standards for integration. The image used again and again in the Danish press is that of a stranger invited into your house who begins to complain about the food and abuse the host and ends by stealing the silverware.

The Danes' unspoken fear is that imperious EU officials in Brussels will force the dismantling of the limits they are just beginning to establish around immigration and welfare policies. This fear may be farfetched. But with their self-righteous denunciation of supposed Danish insularity and xenophobia, it is an attitude European leaders encourage. Danes have welcomed refugees, but the refugees have to follow the rules that everyone else follows. On this point Danes, normally pacific, can be very stubborn.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation: 1) Publication title: Policy Review; 2) Publication no.: 008-059; 3) Filing date: 10/1/00; 4) Issue frequency: Bi-monthly; 5) No. of issues published annually: 6; 6) Annual subscription price: $36; 7) Address of office of publication: 214 Massachusetts Ave NE, Washington DC 20002; 8) Address of headquarters of publisher: same; 9) Names and addresses of: Publisher: Edwin J. Feulner, 214 Massachusetts Ave NE, Washington DC 20002; Editor: Tod Lindberg, 214 Massachusetts Ave NE, Washington DC 20002; Managing Editor: N/A; 10) Owner: The Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave NE, Washington DC 20002; 11) Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders: None; 12) Tax status: Has not changed during preceding 12 months; 13) Publication title: Policy Review; 14) Issue date for circulation data: Oct/Nov 2000; 15) Extent and nature of circulation: A. Total no. copies: ave. no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 mos: 15,834; (no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 14,000); B. Paid and/or requested circulation: 1. paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions: 4,342; (4,871); 2. paid in-county subscriptions: 0; (0); 3. sales through dealers: 3,890; (3,775); 4. other classes mailed: 2,103; (131); C. Total paid/requested: 8,335; (8,777); D. Free dist. by mail: 1. outside-county: 5,482; (3,883); 2. in-county: 0; (0); 3. other classes mailed: 0; (0); E. Free dist. outside mail: 50; (46); F. Total free dist.: 5,532; (3,492); G. Total dist.: 13,867; (12,706); H. Copies not dist.: 1,967; (1,294); I. Total: 15,834; (14,000); J. Percent paid/requested: 68%; (71%); 16) Publication of statement of ownership: required; 17) I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete (signed): Kelly Sullivan, Editorial Office Manager, 10/1/00.

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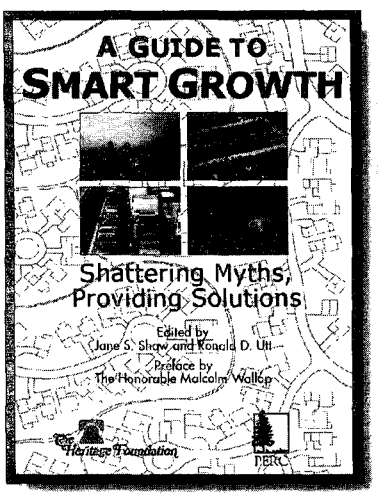
How *Smart* Is Smart Growth?



"Urban sprawl" and its proposed solution, "smart growth," have become top issues nationwide this year. The newly published *A Guide to Smart Growth: Shattering Myths, Providing Solutions* distinguishes between real and imagined causes of sprawl and explores which solutions work, which don't, and why.

Editors Jane Shaw and Ronald Utt are joined by eight other analysts from around the country to dispel some of the common misconceptions about sprawl. They argue that communities trying to curb sprawl should avoid top-down, one-size-fits-all directives that fail to appreciate the great diversity of American communities. Instead, they should strive for locally-created, market-driven solutions.

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BOOKS

The Anxiety of Prosperity

By ELIZABETH ARENS

DINESH D'SOUZA. *The Virtue of Prosperity: Finding Values in an Age of Techno-Affluence.* FREE PRESS. 284 PAGES. $26.00

THIS SHOULD BE a triumphant time for capitalism. The economy of the United States, and of much of the developed world, continues to perform strongly. All formal alternatives to the capitalist method of production have been discredited. The centrality of free trade in stimulating economic activity is overwhelmingly accepted. The equitability of the market as a mechanism for distributing goods is rarely questioned. Furthermore, many government interventions which mitigated the outcomes that arise in the market, from welfare benefits to rent control, have been recognized as disastrously counterproductive. Instead of this triumph, however, protesters flood the cities where the World Trade Organization meets to denounce capitalism in the name of the sea turtle and sweatshop worker. Simultaneously, there has emerged of a critique of capitalism among the very group which has been considered its most reliable defenders: those who are regarded as, and call themselves, political conservatives.

The last time conservatives were involved in such an intense internal debate about capitalism was the late 1970s. This was a period, it may be remembered, in which capitalism didn't seem to be working so well. The U. S. economy was plagued by both high inflation and unemployment, the simultaneous occurrence of which had long been declared impossible by orthodox economists. American society was in beset by a host of other problems as well. The hopeful liberalism of the 1960s had disintegrated into a swarm of extreme, single-minded movements demanding their "rights" in increasingly shrill and uncompromising terms. This was accompanied by a dramatic rise in the levels of crime, divorce, and out of wedlock births. In his influential and controversial work *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, the neoconservative sociologist Daniel Bell undertook to relate these phenomena. Though Bell did not try to account for the specific problems the American economy was experiencing, he did argue that the long-term viability of the capitalist system was in doubt. In doubt, he argued, because capitalism had evolved a consumer orientation that promoted extreme individualism, hedonism, and immediate gratification. These habits and attitudes had replaced the "Protestant ethic" of productive work and delayed gratification, the value system that nurtured and sus-

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tained capitalism in its earlier phase. To the abandonment of this ethic could be traced the social pathologies of the preceding decade, Bell claimed; in its absence, the coherence of American society and popular support for its political institutions were threatened.

In the years that followed, conservatives offered several well-known responses to this thesis. Capitalism was not propelling itself into collapse, argued Irving Kristol, George Gilder, and others; rather, intrusions from the political sphere were stifling capitalism's potential. These government intrusions were led by a "New Class" (a term popularized by Kristol) of over-educated intellectuals, civil servants, and, according to Gilder, the children of the declining rich, which conducted a war on capitalism at once airily utopian and profoundly self-interested. Utopian, for, in their ivory towers, members of the New Class failed to understand and appreciate how the unromantic toil of the businessman was the lifeblood of society. Self-interested, for they were bitter that their skills and interests went relatively unrewarded in the marketplace and hoped to reorganize society in such a way that they might exercise greater power.

A "New Class" of over-educated intellectuals, civil servants, and the children of the declining rich conducted a war on capitalism at once airily utopian and profoundly self-interested.

Like Bell, however, Kristol believed that the capitalist order had inadequacies. He too suggested capitalism was unstable, in his view because it helped to foster the incursions from the political sphere that threatened to overturn it. Not because capitalism promoted vice — one hears little about avariciousness or consumerism from Kristol (though Bell never characterized consumerism as vice, the disapproval in his tone was palpable). Rather because liberal capitalism left people unaided in their struggles with existential questions, with "the eternal dilemmas of the human condition." He described this flaw as potentially fatal for the survival of liberal capitalism, since the "spiritual vacuum" at the center of American society was leading young people to search for answers of the politico-utopian kind and join the adversary culture of the New Class. Kristol acknowledged the difficulties surrounding an attempt to reverse this process: "the limitations of the capitalist order are inseparable from its virtues," first among them being its promotion of human liberty. Furthermore, its alternatives "range from the hideous to the merely squalid."

Two more full-throated defenses of capitalism followed. Michael Novak, writing *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* from an explicitly Christian perspective, defended "the emptiness at

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the core of capitalism" as consistent with the divine grant of free will to humanity. Capitalism, he argued, was a system uniquely suited for the world as God had created it: complex, rife with unintended consequences, populated by beings who were sinners but capable also of trust and imagination. In *Wealth and Poverty*, George Gilder argued that capitalism was a just system that deposited wealth in the hands of those who deserved it most and were most inclined to use it well. Gilder defended not just the capitalist system but the capitalist himself, and in a highly original fashion. Gilder's businessman was not a rapacious robber baron or a narrow-minded profit maximizer, not the conformist company man of 1950s social science, not even the diligent and rational bourgeois of "the Protestant ethic." He was a figure of startling altruism and generosity, one who lived to seek out and fulfill the unconscious desires of his fellow men.

This debate receded as the 1980s progressed, the Cold War escalated and President Reagan took a more confrontational stance toward the Soviet Union. Conservatives fell in behind Reagan and began to talk about capitalism in the same way he did. Capitalism increasingly came to be framed in opposition to the Soviet Union, and the economic and political facets of our society were merged rhetorically into a triumphant whole. Our abundance was contrasted with their material deprivation, our relative economic efficiency and responsiveness with their bureaucratic maze and lumbering state industries, our freedom of expression with their stifling of dissent, our constitutional protections with Soviet citizen's helplessness before arbitrary state action. Talk of capitalism's inherent instabilities and "contradictions" receded in the face of this great duality.

The end of the Cold War can therefore justly be seen as a turning point in the debate over capitalism in more ways than one. At the same time that most of the world was conceding the economic superiority of capitalism, conservatives began again to wrestle with questions about the internal dynamics and moral legitimacy of capitalist society. The issues, of course, have changed. The boom times of the past decade have quelled most doubts about the sustainability of our economic system. The fact that we have experienced unprecedented mass consumerism alongside a flourishing entrepreneurial sector suggests that we have managed to suppress this particular contradiction rather successfully. The counterculture movement so feared by Bell and Kristol has withered away, either merging with the capitalist culture, if you buy David Brooks's argument, or being co-opted and "commodified" by it.

The success of the economic system seems assured; but now this very success is implicated by many conservatives in the creation of a culture that is increasingly, pathologically focused on getting and spending. Furthermore, it is argued, our spending is directed at the gratification of our most childish appetites, at the coarsest and least elevating forms of commercial product. To characterize this as an aesthetic complaint is not to diminish it.

Other charges against capitalism are made from a communitarian perspective. Conservatives have come to perceive that the exigencies of the market will disrupt social institutions as quick-

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ly and thoroughly as any government welfare program or ivory-tower assault on cultural norms. "Rampant" or "unfettered" capitalism is now blamed for destroying the tight-knit communities of old, as well as causing nuclear families to splinter apart. Arguments encompassing both of these elements can be found in the work of Getrude Himmelfarb, William Bennett, Robert Bork, and Alan Ehrenhalt. Perhaps the most trenchant and passionate critique of capitalism to date appeared in last winter's *Public Interest*. In his article "The Spirit of Capitalism, 2000," David Bosworth added to the standard denunciation of consumerism — destroyer of maturity and endless generator of new psychic "needs" — an attack on the ethic of "the Efficient Producer," which has bent parenting to the "grimly anxious pace of the postmodern workplace" and caused family relations to be "stripped of wonder, curiosity, and improvisational fun." Our present age, he argues, is one in which "the market expands to enclose the whole of society so that even the most intimate of activities becomes economically defined." We are caught between the dual "demands for perfect efficiency and unending appetite" and left with "an impoverished definition of human life."

ONCE AGAIN demonstrating a finger well-placed on the nation's political pulse, Dinesh D'Souza has entered this difficult territory with a new work, *The Virtue of Prosperity: Finding Values in an Age of Techno-Affluence,* on the moral questions surrounding capitalism and the direction of American society. D'Souza made his reputation through provocative and timely works dealing with the identity politics in academia and the ill effects of liberal racial policies. In another sign of the new legitimacy of a capitalism critique on the right, D'Souza does not begin *The Virtue of Prosperity* as a defender of our economic system. Instead, he presents himself as an impartial arbiter of the rising debate between those who believe that capitalism, material prosperity, and technological advance are leading to an ever-better world order, whom he dubs the Party of Yeah, and skeptics both on the left and right, the Party of Nah.

It is testimony to the speed of change in the New Economy that the tone and material of the early part of *The Virtue of Prosperity* is already a bit out of date. D'Souza's descriptions of the cocky entrepreneurs at a Silicon Valley party he attended and the passages in which he relates the ease with which a young tech whiz with a "big idea" starts a company, acquires funding, plans an IPO, and watches his stock soar seem anachronistic, given the NASDAQ's sharp decline and the folding of so many e-commerce enterprises. Yet this flaw is hardly fatal to the purpose of the book. Much of *The Virtue of Prosperity* wrestles with fundamental questions that have endured, in one form or another, since the expansion and intensification of the commercial market a century and a half ago. The rest deals with dilemmas specific to new technologies of the Information Revolution, but these do not appear likely to retreat as quickly as the tech stock indices.

Following D'Souza's Silicon Valley set piece is the book's best chapter, in which he describes the coalescence of the Parties of Yeah and Nah and out-

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lines their respective arguments. He then proceeds to discuss and evaluate, in successive chapters, the complaints made by both left and right about capitalism and technology. D'Souza does this in the form of alternating interviews with members of his two Parties, followed by his own commentary. Despite his claim to be acting "like an anthropologist," the purpose of this approach is not really anthropological. He seeks not so much to understand the culture and belief structure of technophiles and those who oppose them as to provide an embodiment for various political positions. To his credit, D'Souza presents people of all perspectives articulating their views coherently and at length (so much so that when he states his own positions, one occasionally feels that he has not fully addressed all the arguments of the opposing side.) And, while the interview format is not essential to providing a full and accurate account of the differing positions, it does make for colorful and popularly accessible reading. D'Souza's occasionally glib treatment of complex ideas and his habit of easily dismissing substantial thinkers (he disposes of John Rawls in a page and a half; Max Weber is given the boot in a single paragraph) can charitably be attributed to the same cause.

D'Souza's conclusions at the end of each chapter tend to place him firmly, though not without reservation, with the Party of Yeah. He begins with the problem of inequality, the traditional talking point of the left. Perceptively, he suggests that for many on the left, complaints about inequality have been a stand-in for complaints about poverty. And, he argues, the evidence is in: "poverty, understood as the absence of food, clothing and shelter is no longer a significant problem in America." What remains is relative inequality. This problem has begun to draw the attention of conservatives as well, since the rapid accumulation of staggering sums of money by people in high tech fields seems to call into question the role of merit in the economy. On the question

D'Souza's conclusions at the end of each chapter tend to place him firmly, though not without reservation, with the Party of Yeah.

of merit, D'Souza wavers. He states that "today it is difference in skills, effort, and earning capacity, and not arbitrary factors such as inheritance or favoritism, that appear to be responsible for producing large differences in earnings and wealth." But he then concedes that the traditional components of merit — hard work, honesty and reliability, drive, even intelligence — are insufficient for business success, which instead requires a specific kind of entrepreneurial instinct and temperament. D'Souza responds with the positivist argument that today's millionaires do merit their rewards, for they have anticipated the wants of the public and produced the goods that satisfied them.

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He then endows that argument with a moral patina, concluding "wealth that is earned rightfully belongs to its creator."

Next D'Souza tackles the questions of the whether capitalism encourages greed and whether wealth promotes moral decay. He rejects George Gilder's notion of the capitalist as altruist, concluding that desire for material gain is the motivating principle of the entrepreneur. D'Souza instead ratifies the argument, developed by Adam Smith and restated most recently by Michael Novak, that markets don't create acquisitiveness; rather, they channel natural human appetites into productive ends. "Capitalism civilizes greed, just as marriage civilizes lust," he argues. As for the supposed corrupting effects of wealth, D'Souza declares that "the widespread notion that the rich are somehow more virtuous than the poor does not stand up to scrutiny." While virtue "does not seem in overabundant supply in either camp," the rich can better afford to be virtuous, while "as a consequence of their condition poor people are pressured to do harmful and degrading things that they would be much less likely to do if they were well off."

What about the claims that capitalism has weakened our ties with nature and with each other? On these issues D'Souza concedes much of the case of capitalism's critics. He expresses dismay at the spoliation of the natural landscape wrought in the name of human progress since the Industrial Revolution. While he chides the Party of Nah for romanticizing life on the land, which was in fact painfully hard, uncertain, and constrained, he acknowledges that something significant was lost as we moved from living in and as part of nature to "living as its overlords, deciding what shall be preserved, what shall be consumed, what shall be cast away."

D'Souza is similarly divided over our changing human relationships. Again, he argues that older, tight-knit communities, from the pre-industrial village to the ethnic enclaves of early twentieth century cities, tended to be narrow, coercive, and stifling. Yet he believes our present fluid and atomistic social order leaves many people isolated and alienated, unable to form meaningful and sustaining attachments. However, D'Souza agrees with the Party of Yeah that the Information Revolution is likely to repair much of the damage that the Industrial Revolution has done. Our increased affluence has permitted us to devote money to the restoration of the environment, and use of the Internet saves energy and natural resources. The demands of the market forced first fathers, then many mothers into an external workplace, but the Internet should enable parents to work at home again, restoring the close family bonds and parental supervision of old. The easy flow of information will also permit people to leave suburban sprawl for smaller communities more conducive to human relationships and a harmonious existence with the land.

D'SOUZA THUS endorses the Party of Yeah's confidence in the power of markets and technology to benefit humanity. His leanings are most evident in the next chapter, which traces the historical development of liberal capitalist thought and associates it with the best achievements of American society. This

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chapter, which suffers from a mode of arguing that implies that thinkers like Hobbes and Locke created commercial society, and from the elision of conflicting ideas within the American tradition, also contains his harshest words for the Party of Nah, whom he calls "whiners and losers." Yet D'Souza's enthusiasm for capitalism is not, finally, unalloyed. He too is concerned by those "eternal dilemmas" Irving Kristol wrote of. True happiness, he writes, requires a life that is meaningful. And in our present age of easy affluence, a sense of meaning is hard to come by. In earlier decades, "the battle for dignity and against degradation . . . provided a seriousness to life, a sense of victory over the elements, an unquestionable moral depth." But now, in the United States at least, the acts of providing for oneself and one's family are no longer suffused with such moral purpose. D'Souza proposes that "affluence itself is partly responsible for eradicating the moral horizons that give significance to life." People who continue to seek sustenance in material things are rapidly discovering that satisfaction does not inhere in accumulation, and that "the good life" is more than "a life filled with good things."

D'Souza ultimately leaves his conception of the good life sketchy. One can infer that his understanding of that ideal involves closer ties with family, community, and nature, but not much else. D'Souza claims that the liberal writers whom he otherwise so admires were silent on the question of how to pursue happiness. He suggests that we take up the works of the ancient thinkers and consider their ideas on the subject, which range from the view that "contemplation is the highest and most satisfying activity for a free human being" to the various endorsements of "a life devoted to a great and heroic action, the life devoted to the private joys of family and relaxation, the life dedicated to teaching, the life charged with political involvement, the life devoted to the service of others, the life devoted to prayer." Clearly, this covers a broad spectrum of human activity. D'Souza's reticence, or perhaps confusion, should not be unexpected in this democratic, relativistic age, in which people are extremely reluctant to impose their understanding of "the good" on others. Indeed, it has been shared by many other recent critics of capitalism. D'Souza differs from these, however, in appearing to believe that the good life, whatever it might be, can be fully achieved within the framework of capitalism, and that capitalism creates no insurmountable barriers, economic or cultural, to its realization.

All conservative social critics run up against a fundamental barrier: that the principal instrument at our disposal for achieving social change is the state.

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D'Souza's prescriptions on how we might move our society in the direction of the good life also seem a bit weak. Reading the classics is one thing on which he insists. Other than that, he proposes that we "permit a portion of Social Security funds to be invested in stock and mutual funds." This policy will give average America a sense of stake in the market system and thus "soften the blow for the losers" in our economic race, who might otherwise turn to despair. More reading and Social Security reform thus constitute the whole of his positive suggestions. This paucity must stem in part from the vagueness of his view of the good life. But D'Souza has also encountered a difficulty endemic to conservative social criticism.

Conservatives are comfortable when the maladies they identify can be attributed to the overreach of government. But when problems originate from outside the political sphere, they tend to follow impassioned denunciations with an odd silence. This has been particularly true of conservative critics of capitalism. Daniel Bell ended *Cultural Contradictions* by calling for the development of a new public philosophy, one which would seem to involve a greater role for the state, but he strenuously avoided mentioning the state or specifying its role. Elsewhere he and others, including Novak and Kristol, have made hopeful predictions of a new Great Awakening, which is usually vague in its theological content but consistent in its rejection of excessive materialism. D'Souza echoes this hope with talk of an imminent "spiritual renewal." He is more optimistic than most, believing that this renewal will be engendered by prosperity itself, which has made possible the luxury of reflecting on its inadequacies. But this talk is ultimately only speculative. All conservative social critics run up against a fundamental barrier: that the principal instrument at our disposal for achieving social change is the state. And the state, for a variously weighted combination of its inefficacy and its coercive tendencies, is more horrible to conservatives than the cultural deficiencies they lament. This dilemma has not disappeared with the new affluence, nor is it likely to be resolved any time soon.

The Future That Never Happened

By Leonard P. Liggio

Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks. *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States*. W. W. Norton & Company. 379 pages. $26.95

Socialism is fading throughout the Western world. In Germany, after two decades of immobility by the centrist Christian Democrats, taxes have now

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been reduced substantially by a Social Democratic government. In Australia and New Zealand, where conservative governments long pursued interventionist policies and left economies wracked by inflation, labor parties now apply neoliberal market principles. According to Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, the greatest ideological distance has been traveled by the Labour Party in Britain, whose leader, Prime Minister Tony Blair, stated in an interview that his administration would "leave British law the most restrictive on trade unionism in the Western world."

While the death knell sounds for socialist theories, it may be timely to consider again the old question of why the United States never experienced a socialist movement with the strength and durability of those in Europe or the revolutionary force of those elsewhere in the world. Lipset and Marks revisit this topic in their fine new book, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States.*

At first, socialists turned a hopeful eye to American shores. After all, by the late nineteenth century the United States had the most advanced capitalist economy in the world. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and other socialist thinkers believed that a mature capitalist society would produce contradictions that would compel workers into a socialist mass movement. As we know, it soon became apparent that capitalism was not headed into collapse. The increasing mechanization of industry did not deprive businessmen of the surplus value "expropriated" from their laborers; rather, it created enormous windfalls, and at the same time made goods available to a broader proportion of the population than ever before.

Still, the American working class was not without grievances. As Lipset and Marks tell it, the Socialist Party of America did find limited popular support in the first decades after its founding in 1901. But the party achieved its very circumscribed success by maintaining its distance from European socialism and, instead, by laying claim to distinctively American values.

Much credit for the early success of the Socialist Party is due to its smart and charismatic leader, Eugene Victor Debs of Indiana, who first gained prominence organizing railway workers. In the 1912 presidential election, with Debs as their candidate, the Socialists received almost a million votes. They also did well in 1920, while Debs was in an Atlanta federal prison, serving time on a sedition conviction for speaking against the 1918 war bond drive. Popular outcry eventually led Republican Warren Harding to release Debs from prison. Throughout his career, Debs portrayed himself as a victim of government repression and capitalized on the American tradition of sympathy for free speech and hostility to the state.

Few socialists found their way into Congress, the most notable of these being Victor Berger, elected many times from Milwaukee, and Meyer London from Manhattan's Lower East Side. Numerous cities, however, elected socialist mayors. Mayors Daniel Hoan in Milwaukee and Jasper McLevy in Bridgeport, Conn., were both long-standing Socialist Party members. The populations that repeatedly elected these men were not a stereotypical propertyless proletariat. The workers in these cities were homeowners and civic

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participants — members of unions and fraternal and life insurance societies.

In another contrast to European-style socialism, low taxes were a major plank in successful Socialist Party platforms. In Milwaukee, according to Lipset and Marks "[p]roperty taxes under successive socialist mayors from 1910 to 1940 were actually lower than in the period before and after their administrations." Socialist-led municipalities placed a strong emphasis on fiscal restraint and efficiency and on eliminating corruption. They often had the full support of the business community in addition to homeowning workers. Victor Berger, the leading socialist in Milwaukee, emphasized the consonance of socialist ideas with those of the American Founders, declaring in 1905: "Friedrich Engels once said: 'Give every citizen a good rifle and fifty cartridges and you have the best guarantee for the liberty of the people.' Thomas Jefferson held the same views exactly."

Lipset and Marks provide an important analysis of the early American union movement, one which goes far in explaining the failure of European socialism to win adherents in the United States. In a section entitled "American Antistatism and Labor," the authors argue that the American labor movement long opposed programs that would have extended the role of the government. The reasoning behind this attitude, expressed eloquently by labor leader Samuel Gompers, was that the state would be far less likely to protect the American worker than to serve the interests of his corporate masters. Gompers was a London-born cigar maker who emigrated to New York in 1863. He was president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) from 1886 until 1923 (except for 1895, after he was defeated by a Socialist Party candidate). Gompers advocated "the wage-earners doing for themselves what they can toward working out their own salvation," massing their own collective power against the power of the industrialists, without the intervention of the state. The authors note that "the AFL was opposed to state provision of old-age pensions, compulsory health insurance, minimum wage legislation, and unemployment compensation, and from 1914 on was against legislating minimum hours for men." Quoting historian David DeLeon, they argue that "'Social democracy, communism, and other relatively authoritarian movements that rely upon coercive centers of state power' have run against deep libertarian currents in American culture and as a result have never succeeded in developing deep roots."

The size and diversity of America's immigrant population presented further obstacles, cultural and organizational, to the American socialist movement. Lipset and Marks report that by the mid-nineteenth century, only one-fifth of wage earners in the United States had native white parents, and almost three-fifths were of immigrant origin. The labor force in the United States soon became the most ethnically heterogeneous in the world, they state, and by 1930 "roughly one-third of the total population was of foreign stock." Seeking to explain "why the party failed to gain the allegiance of the poorest, most vulnerable sections of the population," Lipset and Marks point

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to the difficulties of uniting immigrants of different languages and cultures — populations which competed for jobs and whose ethnic animosities were often encouraged by employers and politicians. Studies have shown that immigrants were far more likely to look to their own people than to a political movement for help with their immediate needs and long-term security. Jewish and Catholic immigrants created flourishing voluntary and fraternal societies that provided social services and health, unemployment, and life insurance. Fraternal life insurance companies had 8.5 million members by 1910; more wage earners were members of fraternal societies than of labor unions. The proliferation of voluntary associations among Jewish, Italian, and Slavic immigrants in cities like Chicago and New York amazed reformers.

Moreover, the traditions immigrants brought from the old world were often hostile to socialist aims. Lipset and Marks point particularly to resistance to socialism among immigrants from Catholic countries. Political observers were already commenting on this phenomenon in the years before Word War I. Lipset and Marks cite British author G.D.H. Cole, who wrote, "the growing political strength of Catholicism was of great influence in keeping the Trade Unions aloof from any movement wearing a socialist label or 'tainted' with class war doctrine or materialist philosophy of action." Lipset and Marks argue that while Catholic leaders in the United States endorsed trade unionism, they repeatedly attacked socialism and pronounced the sanctity of private property. In doing so, they followed the lead of the Vatican, which condemned socialism in the papal encyclicals of 1891 and 1903. Archbishop Sebastian Messmer of Milwaukee did not transgress the bounds of his authority in declaring that "the private ownership of property is supported by the gospel apostolic teaching, and the rules of the Church, and is a divine ordination, not to be changed by the hand of man. . . . A man cannot be a Catholic and a Socialist."

Lipset and Marks demonstrate how homegrown traditions of mistrust of state power and respect for private property interacted with the attitudes of immigrant populations to deny European theorists' dreams of a socialist America.

As the proportion of Catholic workers grew, the American Catholic church also had direct influence over the political leanings of the labor movement. Church leaders urged the American Federation of Labor to adhere to Catholic social views and to eshew political remedies in favor of "pure and simple" trade unionism. They were persuasive. Lipset and Marks write that

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"Samuel Gompers, although a Jew, worked hard to convince Catholic church leaders that he was sympathetic to their outlook."

This analysis contrasts with the traditional linking of capitalism and bourgeois democracy with the Protestant faith, an association that arises from Max Weber's original formulation in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Lipset and Marks argue the opposite: that there is a strong correlation between capitalism and Catholicism. They point out that "in Germany, socialism flourished primarily in the Protestant areas in the east, e.g., Prussia, while in western Germany, the Catholic Church, as in Latin Europe, repeatedly condemned atheistic materialistic socialism and weakened the appeal of the Social Democratic party." Recent studies have demonstrated that Catholic immigrants were longtime supporters of the liberal parties in England, Canada, and Australia, and the U. S. Democratic Party. As these parties strayed from principles of individual liberty, sound money, parental rights, and voluntarism, however, Catholics moved to the parties that newly espoused them, as the Republican party has done since the New Deal. Lipset and Marks do, however, lay at Protestantism's feet another trait that repeatedly bedeviled the American Socialist Party — a tendency towards sectarianism, doctrinal wrangling, and schism.

Lipset and Marks thus demonstrate how homegrown traditions of mistrust of state power and respect for private property interacted with the attitudes of immigrant populations to deny European theorists' dreams of a socialist America. They give credit to American affluence and social mobility. They lay out the reasons why the significant labor unrest of the years surrounding the turn of the century was not often expressed in political terms. And they point to structural features, foremost among them our two-party system, that made it difficult for the Socialist Party to gain a political foothold. It is by this close attention to historical circumstance, as well as a grasp of broad cultural features, that Lipset and Marks make an important contribution to a discussion that has been marred by overgeneralizations on one side of the political spectrum and bitterness and self-delusion on the other.

All about Jane

By Steven C. Munson

Jane Alexander. *Command Performance: An Actress in the Theater of Politics.* Public Affairs. 336 pages. $25.00

There are basically two kinds of people who get appointed to run federal agencies. In one category are those who come in with a certain degree of humility about the job they have been asked to do, are open to the possibility of learning what the organization is for

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Steven C. Munson writes about art for Commentary.

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and how it works, and, as a result, stand some chance of being successful, by whatever measure, in their predictably brief tenure. In another category are those who, unable or unwilling to understand or accept the essentially political nature of the work they have agreed to undertake, find it frustrating, demoralizing, and ultimately incomprehensible. They leave office disillusioned and embittered, and attribute their lack of success to the bad motives of their adversaries or to the unworkability of "the system" — to anything, in short, but some kind of failure on their part.

Into this second category falls Jane Alexander, star of stage, screen, and television and one-time head of the National Endowment for the Arts. Her brisk but tedious memoir tells the story of her four-year stint at the NEA, from 1993 to 1997, and how it happened that the agency put in her charge was forced into a wholesale restructuring of its operations — in particular, the method by which it gave out grants — and came to have nearly half of its budget cut by Congress. In Washington terms, this outcome was about as drastic as they come.

Trouble had been brewing for the NEA for some time before Alexander's arrival. In 1989, a scandal erupted over the revelation that NEA money had gone to museums that had exhibited homosexual sadomasochistic photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe and a piece by Andres Serrano called "Piss Christ," in which a crucifix was submerged in a jar of the artist's urine. Several years later, John Fronmayer, the head of the endowment during the Bush administration, was in effect run out of town when he was unable to contain the controversy that followed his denial of grants to four artists under the "decency clause" that Congress had inserted into the NEA's reauthorizing statute. The "NEA Four," as they came to be called, included Karen Finley, a performance artist who had become famous for smearing chocolate on her nude body on stage. They filed a lawsuit that became a rallying point for those who felt Congress should impose no restrictions on the NEA's grant-giving process. In the wake of all these events, it was hardly surprising that, when control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives passed to the Republicans in 1995, the long knives were out for the NEA.

That Jane Alexander was singularly unprepared to deal with this crisis is a point she makes over and over again. But her lack of political acumen was evident even before she moved from New York to Washington. Having lobbied hard for the job and learned that it had come down to a choice between her and one other candidate, she was waiting for the final decision from the White House. When the word came, she received a call telling her to stand by, she would shortly be receiving a call from the president. After an hour or so, she grew impatient and decided to run out for a sandwich. When she came back, she found a message on her answering machine: The president had called and would try again to reach her. So she waited some more, grew impatient again, and went out to pick up her dry cleaning. When she came back, there was another message on her machine from Air Force One. Not surprisingly, she tells us, the president did not call a third time. Later, after she had been confirmed and started work, she wondered why her requests for a

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meeting with the president to discuss NEA matters went unanswered for two years. Yet all her puzzlement and exasperation never did lead her to reflect on her own outrageous behavior. Likewise, she seemed completely unaware that her decision to go ahead with a long-planned rafting vacation at the very time a critical congressional subcommittee mark-up was taking place signaled a failure to recognize the exigencies of her position as head of an embattled agency.

Alexander went to Washington with a certain view of herself — as a kind of grande dame who was simply above doing the sorts of things, and finding a way of making the sorts of compromises, that are essential to political success.

As these incidents suggest, Alexander went to Washington with a certain view of herself — as a kind of grande dame who was simply above doing the sorts of things, and finding a way of making the sorts of compromises, that are essential to political success. Little wonder, then, that she quickly came to see herself primarily as a victim of forces beyond her control — namely, the "Religious Right" and the "extremist" Republicans on Capitol Hill.

Yet what was it that, in her view, made these Republicans so difficult to deal with? Time and again, what they tried to make clear to her was that they were unhappy about the fact that NEA money, in some way, shape, or form, had found its way into the hands of artists whose work was either of extremely dubious value or highly offensive to their moral sensibilities and those of their constituents. Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ"; Karen Finley's performance art; Ron Athey's cutting of an HIV-infected man's back on stage, dabbing the wounds with paper towels, and sending these artifacts out over the heads of the audience on a pulley line; an obscure conceptual artist using his $1,700 of NEA money to hand out $10 bills to Mexicans illegally crossing into the United States — these sorts of things were what got the Republicans so upset. And they are not self-evidently deserving of funding by anyone, including the federal government. But when the congressmen asked Alexander if the NEA was going to continue, somehow, to be associated with such activities, all she could do was equivocate, cite the First Amendment, and declare her opposition to censorship. Even when the White House asked her to dissociate the NEA from the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis — a longtime, and perhaps generally deserving, grantee, but also the sponsor of the Athey performance — she refused, insisting that no one involved had done anything wrong.

Her confusion about these matters is evident. At one point, she freely admits that the most the NEA can hope to do is go on funding mediocre art, which

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leaves you wondering why she was so self-righteously obstinate in dealing with Congress and the White House. In any case, like most of the current custodians of our cultural life, Alexander had adopted a rigidly self-serving "art-is-what-artists-say-it-is-and-nobody-has-the-right-to-tell-them-otherwise" attitude. She maintained this position even as it became clear that doing so was an invitation to Congress to act. She stuck to it even when, as her account makes clear, many members preferred not to act if they could possibly avoid it. And in the end, they did act, with drastic results for the NEA's budget (although the effect of this on the arts in America seems to have been negligible).

The fact that this sort of budget cutting is so unusual is a matter of much anguish to conservatives, who know that even at the height of the so-called Republican Revolution that began with the takeover of Congress in the 1994 elections and ended with the fall of House Speaker Newt Gingrich not very long afterward, very few federal programs were permanently or significantly cut, and even fewer abolished altogether. One that was eliminated was the U.S. Information Agency, an organization whose activities and impact, being intellectual or cultural in nature, were, like those of the NEA, not always easy to explain or justify even when the need was most apparent. In the case of USIA, that need may have been less clear after the end of the Cold War. But that was not the reason the agency got the ax, although it was used by some as a handy excuse. As one congressional aide told me in 1995, USIA wasn't even on the budget-cutters' radar screen until its director took it upon himself to brief the new Congress on his own peculiarly insular view of the organization's mission, which was essentially the opposite of its longstanding, and long recognized, purpose. Although the hapless appointee did not know it at the time, his briefing, and what it signified, sealed his agency's fate.

The point here, and one that Alexander seems incapable of grasping, is that who's running an agency in Washington, and how he or she approaches that task, can actually make a difference, for good or ill. While the NEA, unlike USIA, was spared extinction, it is by no means clear that its survival was because of, rather than despite, Jane Alexander. In effect, the Republicans said to her, "show us a way out other than having to dictate terms," and she gave them the back of her hand, all in the name of "principle."

DID SHE HAVE any choice? There are times when she suggests that, if she had better understood what she calls the "political game," she might have done things differently. Yet one doesn't quite find her convincing when she tells us that it was her ignorance and inexperience that led her to be so stubborn. For presumably she was being advised, if she couldn't quite fathom it herself, that the NEA was in grave danger. In such circumstances, one might have expected her to be desperately looking for a way to stave off disaster. No, the real problem was not her ignorance and inexperience, great as those may have been, or even the fact that the NEA was in hot water before she arrived. The real problem was that she suffered from a complete lack of imagination

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when it came to dealing with politicians, especially those on the other side.

As someone who reminds us repeatedly that she had played, and loved playing, characters in the theater, from Shakespeare and Eugene O'Neill and Wendy Wasserstein, not to mention innumerable roles in the movies and on television, Jane Alexander seemed utterly at a loss when it came to understanding the psychology of a Republican congressman — not exactly the most impenetrable of men walking the earth — or even that of her own Democratic president. If she had made such an imaginative effort, she might have found a way to respond to their concerns that would have been true to her agency's mission, preserved much more of its budget, and gone some way toward appeasing its critics. At the very least, she would have been able to propose the kind of sensible reforms she ended up being forced to carry out anyway, reforms that ended the practice of giving grants to individual artists and made organizational recipients far more accountable than they had been in the past. That way, she could have gotten credit for taking the initiative, which would surely have reduced, if not broken, the budget-cutting fever.

As it was, she seems only to have been able to empathize with those, like Sen. Ted Kennedy, who already agreed with her preconceived notions. That, as it turned out, didn't really do her much good, since the Democrats and the liberal Republicans were not calling the shots (and she was clearly taken aback when the late John Kennedy Jr. said to her at a Georgetown dinner party, after listening to her blindly heap praise on his uncle for his support of the arts, "Now all we have to do is get him some taste"). And because of this blinkered approach she was ultimately unable to reconsider the larger issue that was central to the dilemma she faced — just what are and what are not legitimate purposes and activities for the NEA to be involved in?

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LETTERS

Remedies for The Russian Press

SIR, — Herman J. Obermayer's piece on "Russia's Dysfunctional Media Culture" (August/September 2000) was a welcome attempt at describing a situation so bizarre that it almost defies understanding by Westerners. Thus I can understand why he turned to characterization and generalization to get his points across. Lamentably, those techniques may leave the reader with some mistaken or erroneous impressions that these characterizations apply universally. They do not. He paints a picture that is generally correct, but not always specifically correct.

But more importantly, I am writing in dismay over some of his closing recommendations. One is for the discontinuance of U.S. assistance for the emergence of press freedom in Russia. He justifies such by criticizing the work of USAID contractors such as the National Press Institute. To me, however, this seems like the old shooting-the-messenger fallacy. Contractors are hired to do the bidding of the contracting agent: USAID. And it is that agency that has spent tens of millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars in pursuit of press freedom in Russia — without a viable strategic plan for accomplishing that goal. The result has been a discordant array of programs that, while successful in their own right, have failed to put a real dent in the problem. The remedy should not be to discontinue aid, but to use it according to a realistic plan aimed at enabling press freedom to emerge. I remember that in 1998, for instance, the National Press Institute proposed a newspaper recovery plan in the wake of Russia's financial crisis. It was a very good and comprehensive plan. But USAID simply chose to fund a few isolated components of the plan, thus nullifying its potential impact.

Mr. Obermeyer's other recommendation is that providing interventions for mid-career Russian media professionals is counterproductive. He implies that too many years of Marxist indoctrination have made them virtually unsalvageable. Instead, he proposes, "Bringing all of Russia's college journalism teachers to America for a few weeks." First, I hope everyone realizes how preposterous it is to think that a problem as complex and enigmatic as the one that is the focus of Mr. Obermayer's article could be solved in two weeks. Furthermore, there is a disconnect in his thinking: If the mid-career media managers are so damaged as a result of their prior Marxist background, how will journalism teachers be any different? His assertion that there is an insufficient level of retail commerce to support independent newspapers is also incorrect.

What then is the solution? Indeed, what really is the problem that must be solved? It is that Russia maintains an assortment of laws and policies that actually preclude real press freedom from existing. Mr. Obermayer is correct that greater advertising revenues are needed by newspapers if they are to

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become independent and self-supporting. Yet there are currently laws that work against that. They limit how much companies can spend on advertising, and limit how much advertising a newspaper can carry. Advertising revenue possibilities are further diminished by the presence of state enterprises and monopolies (private or public) operating in the economy. They have the effect of minimizing commercial competition. And after all, advertising is only needed when there is competition in the sale of products and services. But that situation flows not from the state of the Russian economy, but from the policy and legal parameters that are involved.

As a result, newspapers can not receive enough money from advertising and circulation for operating profitable businesses. Indeed, based on their actual newspaper operations, practically every newspaper in the country exists in a virtual state of bankruptcy.

The revenue shortfall is made up in two ways. The first is by publishing for clients, paid public relations stories masquerading as news. The second is by taking subsidies, sometimes disguised as investments, from commercial or political forces who are interested in presenting the public with a distorted version of the news. Since newspapers need the money offered by those interested in coloring the news, they comply with the wishes of those who are paying the bills. Their only alternative would be to go out of business.

In President Putin's state of the nation address, he lamented over this situation. Putin said: "But without a truly free press, Russian democracy simply will not survive, and a civil society will not emerge. Unfortunately, we have not moved forward to draw up clear-cut democratic rules to guarantee the genuine independence of the "fourth estate." I want to underline that word "genuine." Meanwhile, however, journalistic freedom has become an irresistible temptation for the politicians and the largest financial groups to use the media as an instrument in inter-clan struggles. As the president of this country, I think it is my duty to draw the public's attention to this."

Moreover, beyond simply identifying the problem, he promised to change things. He said: "Because of this, we must guarantee journalists genuine freedom, not just the pretense of freedom, by creating in this country the legal and economic conditions that are needed for civilized information businesses to exist."

Even before President Putin spoke, a new order from the Ministry of Finance had improved the prospects for selling advertising. The limit on tax deductible expenditures for advertising had been set at 2 percent. The new order raises that to 5 percent. While this is a welcome change, the limit remains graduated downward. Big companies are allowed to deduct a lower percentage than small companies. The limit applies not only to media advertising. It also includes expenses for catalogues, brochures, promotional samples, signage, showrooms, and more.

If President Putin is really serious about creating genuine press freedom, more change is needed. Any kind of limit like this discourages advertising and encourages the practices of sponsorship and hidden advertising which are illegal under the Law on Advertising. That is the law that also

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limits the amount of advertising that newspapers and broadcasters can accept to 40 percent and 25 percent respectively. Together these laws and others create a framework that makes it virtually impossible for a media enterprise to be truly profitable and free. Indeed, they create the very circumstances that President Putin bemoans.

I urge that everyone embrace President Putin's vision for genuine press freedom and an end to the unprofitableness that plagues the Russian media industry. Not only that, I urge that the world community hold the President accountable — especially when considering loans and other forms of assistance — for his promise to create the legal and economic conditions that are needed for civilized information businesses to exist in Russia today!

WILLIAM DUNKERLEY
New Britain, Conn.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *William Dunkerley is a business consultant and analyst who specializes in assisting media organizations in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.*

SIR, — I am an American freelance journalist who formerly edited the *Vladivostok News*, which Herman J. Obermayer mentions in his article "Russia's Dysfunctional Media Culture" (August/September 2000). Many of Mr. Obermayer's broader points about Russian journalism are on-target, but I must correct some errors in his discussion of Vladivostok.

The largest daily newspaper in the city by the same name is the *Vladivostok*, not the *Vladivostok News*. The Russian-language *Vladivostok* also publishes an editorially independent English-language weekly called the *Vladivostok News*, formerly printed but now surviving on the internet only.

The distinction is important, because we at the *Vladivostok News* often covered stories that other papers, including our parent publication, would not touch. To take two examples, we reported that Governor Yevgeny Nazdratenko illegally gave the skin of an endangered Siberian tiger to Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko, and we were one of the few local papers to cover Mayor Yury Kopylov's use of armed police to close the independent Radio Lemma last November.

Mr. Obermayer incorrectly states that the city owns the "*Vladivostok News*" (again, he means the *Vladivostok*). Former Mayor Viktor Cherepkov, who spent years feuding with the *Vladivostok*, would be astonished to hear that. Even the current mayor, who has received friendlier press, does not own the paper. Rather, the *Vladivostok* is politically aligned with (though not owned by) Governor Nazdratenko, a bitter political foe of the former mayor. There are any number of reasons why the media here have been so cowed: anonymous thugs have beaten up reporters, courts have jailed journalists, and yes, the governor's administration owns the only printing press in the city and pays newspapers for printing press releases.

In any case, it is untrue that "the mayor provided his institutional flacks [at the *Vladivostok*] with a modern building, fancy offices, new furniture, and luxury appointments." Cherepkov,

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who was mayor at the time we moved into the new building in December 1997, was too busy publishing his own newspaper (*Primorye*) to buy real estate for a paper that vilified him. Mr. Obermayer is rightly suspicious of the building's funding sources, but the *Vladivostok*'s building is spare by American standards. I never did get drawers for my desk, and for six months I worked on a computer screen that gradually turned pea green the longer it stayed on. The conference room and publisher's and editor's offices were no fancier than those at several small-town Oregon and Washington dailies where I have worked.

Mr. Obermayer incorrectly writes that our salaries were paid by a USAID grant. Rather, the parent company received a one-time U.S. grant in 1996 to buy equipment and develop its web site. And if someone told Mr. Obermayer that reporters may earn more than the editor, this is flat-out wrong. Perhaps this is one of those lies that Russian bosses and politicians trot out for foreigners, in an effort to project an image of egalitarianism. But it is instructive to compare where reporters live — in tiny studio apartments with rats in the stairwells — to the then-editor's expansive apartment, remodeled to European standards and filled with expensive furnishings.

Reporters I talked to were amazed at Mr. Obermayer's assertion that the journalists' association can challenge management's editing or policy decisions. Even if true, this would be no reason for cheer. The association is a craven, pro-governor body that passes out bottles of vodka on holidays but failed to react when we went unpaid for three months. In July, a court loyal to the governor jailed Irina Grebneva, the editor of *Arsenievskie Vesti*, for five days on a charge of "petty hooliganism" because the paper had quoted the governor and other top leaders profanely scheming about how to help Kopylov steal the mayoral elections. Nobody contested the veracity of the quotes. She was jailed simply because somebody wanted to teach her a lesson. The journalists' association promptly issued a statement condemning Grebneva.

Finally, it is unfair to imply that *Business Ars* and the *Zolotoi Rog* (the *Golden Horn*) are government mouthpieces simply because, "when pressed for facts," they would not disclose their shareholders to an American visitor who popped in. *Business Ars* regularly takes on the governor's office in print, and *Zolotoi Rog* is the closest thing to a Western-style newspaper in town. It displays independence and even, at times, a quiet courage, by interviewing Nazdratenko critics who are blacklisted from pro-governor publications. Until recently its staff included two former radio journalists, Alexei Sadykov and Andrei Zhuravlyov, who had been kidnapped and tortured in 1995, after they criticized a previous mayor who now serves as Nazdratenko's first vice governor. Any newspaper on the frontline of a battle for a free press in a former totalitarian state is at least as deserving of grant money, in my view, as 10,800 Russian J-school students who might be sent abroad to be tutored by American reporters.

While there is much to criticize about the Russian media, there are some genuine press heroes in Vladivostok, among them Grebneva,

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Sadykov, Zhuravlyov, and Capt. Grigory Pasko, who spent 20 months in jail on high treason charges because of his reporting that the Navy was dumping liquid radioactive waste in the Sea of Japan. It seems only fair to acknowledge those struggling, at the risk of assault and imprisonment, to report the truth. It is downright peevish to wander from newsroom to newsroom, demanding lists of shareholders, and then tar the heroes as cowards because their answers did not satisfy. A better approach might have been simply to read the papers.

RUSSELL WORKING
Vladivostok, Russia

THE AUTHOR REPLIES,

Mr. Dunkerley's three main challenges to my article can be summarized: 1) Blame for the failure of U.S. media-aid programs should be placed on USAID itself, rather than contractors. Considering the role of contractor proposals in USAID procedures, this is a chicken-or-the-egg question. 2) The importance of regulation and taxation in hamstringing independent newspapers is not adequately recognized. Russia's retail merchants do not buy, inventory, or promote in a way that will generate advertising in the volume necessary to support independent, viable newspapers notwithstanding tax or regulatory regimes. Russia's hesitant — often hostile — approach to marketing and advertising reflects a deep cultural problem which has a direct effect on media economics. 3) President Putin's statements and "vision" are encouraging, but only his actions count. Remember: The USSR's constitution categorically and unequivocally guaranteed a free press.

Mr. Working's letter from Vladivostok challenges me in two important areas. 1) Who financed *Vladivostok*'s mortgage-free, six-story office building, which was constructed in1997? I said it was paid for by the municipality. Mr. Working says that at the time of construction the mayor was preoccupied, and the building is not elaborate by U.S. standards. Both statements are correct. Still, he is unable to suggest an alternate funding source. 2) He says it is unfair to say *Business Ars* and *Golden Horn* are government mouthpieces. Both need major local government support to survive. Both have their editorial offices in municipally owned buildings, are produced in official "press printing palaces," and are distributed in government vehicles.

HERMAN J. OBERMAYER
Arlington, Va.

The School Choice Antidote

SIR, — Jon Jewett's pairing of books for review ("Progress v. Progressive Education," October/November 2000) was apt. *Left Back* — Diane Ravitch's examination of the destructive effects of the progressive movement on public education throughout the twentieth century — is one of the most important books about education of the past decade. Ms. Ravitch is surgically precise in identifying how the progressives' success in making schools less academic institutions than agencies of applied social uplift has tainted education reform for a century. The antidote to this anti-intellectualism perpetuated in

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the teacher training colleges is parental choice, because most parents want their children to be learning academic lessons, not doing group projects on homelessness or the rain forest.

So the second book Mr. Jewett examines, *When Schools Compete: A Cautionary Tale*, is fitting because it explores New Zealand's decade-old venture in making parental choice the driving force of public education. No other nation has gone so far in replacing highly centralized control of education with consumer choice and competition among the schools. Authors Edward B. Fiske and Helen F. Ladd deserve two cheers for bringing details of the New Zealand experiment to widespread attention via the ever-cranking Brookings Institution presses. But stifle that third cheer, because their liberal bias evidently blinds them to the full dimensions of the school-choice success story in New Zealand.

Even though solid majorities of parents, teachers, and principals favor school choice and want it to continue, Fiske and Ladd regard New Zealand as a "cautionary tale," not a success story. Why? Because freedom has produced winners and losers among the schools, and ethnic-minority children (the Maori and Pacific Islanders) tend to be disproportionately among the latter. But that only points out the need to take the next step: Let entrepreneurs (such as some of the better charter school operators in the U.S.) take over the failing schools and bring them up to snuff.

Education choice pinpoints failure and enables the system to do something about it. By contrast, a centralized system held in the progressive mindset's sway guarantees that all children lose.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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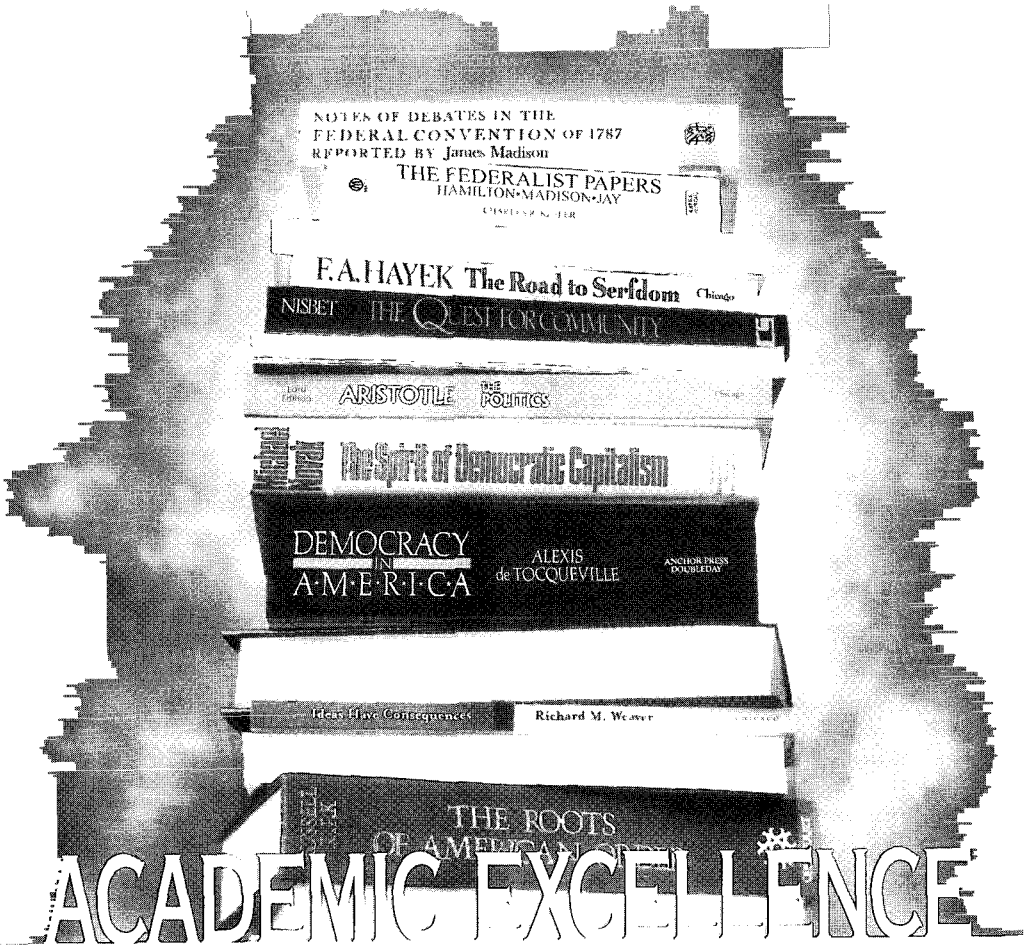
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